ELSA GARZA LARUMBE

MAESTRA EN LETRAS MODERNAS

U. N. A. M.

A PRELUDE TO PURITANISM

MEXICO, D. F.

1962

A María Garza Larumbe.

CONTENTS

The Roman Catholic Church, sprung from the *Ecclesia* of the Acts of the Apostles, had by the early middle ages in its care a most complex and extensive range of activity, not only religious but secular as well, these two functions being closely interwoven. The then established order, accepted without question, was that of a universal monarchy embodied in one Holy Roman Empire (although the existence of this empire was to a great extent theoretical and lacking in administrative force), and of a Christendom undivided. Yet by the late medieval period there were unmistakeable signs of a shift of thought that was to offer scope for the introduction of Church and State as separately functioning organisms, and ideas which before would have been considered impious or visionary, now were beginning to be thought possible, and by some, even advisable. This is not to say the change was swift, nor did it come with a sudden shattering of the old moulds; for a long time there was still to be veneration for the past and the deep-rooted traditions in religion and in philosophical speculation. But the impulse was there and it was to gain momentum.

To an observer surveying the wide vista of history, the movement by which secular princes took over, within their respective dominions, the entire organization, administrative and financial, that the Papacy had through the

centuries built up, is clearly discernible. (1)

The medieval Church, first described by Saint Thomas Aquinas as a divinely established absolute monarchy, with its head, the Pope, concentrating in his person the entire authority, was the source of all ecclesiastical law (conditor juris). And even before the Thomist definition, he had been acknowledged the heir of Peter, to whom the Keys were given. But that the Church, besides being a spiritual leader had also the attributes of an international state is a fact that cannot be disregarded in determining the character of the Protestant secession from it. Two centuries before the Reformation the transfer of Papal prerogatives was initiated, the process taking place in Protestant States as well as in those that retained the Catholic orthodoxy. By the sixteenth century the process was made complete.

While the separatist movement was wide reaching, it is necessary, if briefly, to touch upon the forces and circumstances that brought about the cleavage, in England, of State and Church, which occurred simultaneously with its Reformation. These comprehend factors social, economical, political and religious. Though the New Learning gave the impulse speed, the middle ages were by no means static, and ideas burgeoned then that were to flower in the Renaissance. The middle ages were indeed a living process, not a fixed state, and the Renaissance developed out of the old while

---

1. Toynbee, A., <u>A Study of History</u>, p. 384.

the two continued side by side.

Far into the new age some old forms lingered, as for one, the conception of chivalry which, as it lost much of its pristine religious idealism gained only in outer trappings of pomp and splendour. True, the late Lancastrian kings created a number of orders of knighthood, but very different were they from the Templars or the Hospitaliers. Though knight errantry and the crusading spirit were dead and single-handed combat a feature of the chivalric times, jousts were still a part of the rich pageantry of the Field of the Cloth of Gold; and preoccupation with death, that cast such a sombre shadow on medieval art and medieval literature subsisted in the full flush and optimism of the Renaissance as a deep strain of Melancholy.

As the concept of a hierarchical order and of a stratified society where every class had its preordained function became more unreal, the lay spirit was strengthened; already craftsmen were chafing under the restrictions of their guilds and merchants, finding it increasingly burdensome to accept the limitations of just price and fair interest set by the Church. Humanism, as it spells anthropocentric interest, was perceptible, for the individual was beginning to emerge from the self-effacing group concerned mainly with things ultra-mundane to take a more dynamic role and to grasp whatever opportunities this world could offer, although

man had not become yet the center of admiration and of wonder, nor had he inspired in his fellow man that pitch of enthusiasm so well to be expressed by the greatest of the Elizabethan poets:

> What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! (2)

By the latter part of the fourteenth century England had become a distinct nation with sense and pride or nationhood. With the discovery of America the hub of the world was to change; but then her geographical position was not thought favourable, placing her as it did in the uttermost reaches of civilisation to be merely the recipient of European cultural influences. If here was not as yet a 'splendid isolation', her separateness did mean she could develop more fully her insular characteristics and peculiar institutions: parliament and legal system, language and literature.

Of the various regional dialects, what was to be the predominant vernacular tongue, that of the East Midlands, was coming to the fore and superseding Latin and French in common usage, though many there were in Church and Court perforce bilingual still who used either of the two cultured languages as an alternative one. The linguistic situation of 1375, well estimated by a contemporary of Chaucer's was:

---

2. Hamlet, Act II, sc. ii.

Some can French and no Latin,
That have used courts and dwelled therein:
And some have of Latin a party,
That can French full febelly;
And some understandeth English
That neither can Latin nor French:
But lerid and lewid, old and young
All understanden the English tongue. (3)

Certainly the younger generation understood English and much preferred to use it at all times, for but ten years later John of Trevisa noted that schoolchildren attending the grammar schools, even those belonging to the upper classes, heretofore from their early years taught to use French as the medium of polite intercourse, now 'kenned no more Frensche than can their left heele.' (4)

And other signs there were that French was on the wane. In 1362 the courts of law began to use English, and Parliament for the first time was opened in English; and at the turn of the century when Henry of Lancaster claimed the throne, he chose to speak in the 'moder tongue'. By the fourteen hundreds, there were ambassadors sent to the court of France who did not even know the French language 'after the schole of Stratford-atte-Bowe' but were ignorant of it altogether. (5)

---

3. quot. Trevelyan, History of England, p. 235 (William of nassington).
4. quot. Trevelyan, op. cit. p. 234.
5. Bindoff, S.T., Tudor England, p. 80.

THE ENGLISH CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

It has long been a commonplace that the evident corruption of the Medieval Church, by creating a revulsion of feeling against it, paved the way for the Reformation. Nevertheless, there is a noticeable trend among contemporary historians (while all are in accord in granting there were visible signs of fraying in the ecclesiastical fabric) to weigh in the balance other factors as contributing as much, if not more, to effect the Anglican secession from Rome. In a strain of revaluation of this complex historical movement, it is generally conceded that laxity and decay there were in the English Church, though never as great as in some Continental countries that remained faithful to the Holy See. One writer believes that "in England a relatively good level was maintained throughout"; (1) another holds this as especially true of the mendicant orders, active and popular till the moment of their dissolution by Henry VIII.(2) The Church, states Professor Trevelyan, "was no more corrupt in the time of Chaucer than was Royal justice or the conduct of the lords and their retainers. Most institutions in the Middle Ages were 'corrupt' by modern standards. (3) Quite naturally, the degree in which the rule was kept in the different religious houses varied, in accordance with the ability and diligence of the governors, the strictness

---

1. Butler, E.C., "Monasticism"
2. Myers, A.R., England in the Late Middle Ages, p.40.
3. Trevelyan, G.M., English Social History, p.40.

of the enclosure enforced, and the sincerity of the vocation of the inmates, observes Mr. A.I.Doyle – but paradoxically enough – it was the wealthiest houses which adhered more exactly to their rule and to the pursuit of the contemplative life. (4) Mr. Hilaire Belloc makes the point that the men and women thrust out into the world upon the abrogation of the religious institutions were considered by their contemporaries worthy of fulfilling other duties of responsibility – and these duties they satisfactorily fulfilled – an impossible thing had they been the abject beings history records. (5) And Mr. S.T.Bindoff remarks: "Few people now believe that the monasteries were the dens of iniquity which Cromwell's ruffians described, few that they were any longer the haunts of holiness they might once have been." (6) To this Mr. A.R.Myers adds that the existing abuses and superstitions "might not by themselves have been enough to produce the Reformation. There had been corruption in the Church before without causing disruption, and many evils were dealt with by the Council of Trent. It is easy to exaggerate the defects of this time, and they were, on the whole, much less serious in the English Church, which broke away from Rome, than in the Italian

---

4. Doyle, A.I., The Age of Chaucer, Part II, p. 100.
5. Belloc, H., Isabel de Inglaterra, p. 97.
6. Bindoff, S.T., Tudor England, p. 105.

Church, which did not. They provided the Reformers with very effective arguments, but other causes of the Reformation were equally important." (7)

Yet, while no doubt, many monks were still pious and many friars still active in good works, and "scandals but infrequent", (8) the fire of religious zeal burning at white heat in earlier times to cast a glow, on learning and on art, was reduced well-nigh to embers, for the spirit of joyful renunciation of worldly things was gone. The Franciscans no longer walked hand in hand with Lady Poverty to follow Christ; the Benedictines were finding it irksome to follow the precept of their Order requiring them to be vegetarians, now they were asking for 'pittances' or extra meat dishes to supplement their meals.

Indeed, the religious wished to enjoy the increased comforts the age provided, such as glazed windows, panelled walls, individual cubicles, clocks, bedsteads.... (9) Domestic servants had long been employed, now sometimes their number was greater than that of the monks in the monasteries. Of the Regular Orders, only the Carthusians could say in all truth to the end: <u>nunquam reformata quia nunquam deformata</u>, for they maintained the strictness of their rule and the intensity of their faith. It is no wonder that, when

---

7. Myers, Op. cit., p.221.
8. Trevelyan, Op. cit.,p. 72.
9. Myers, Op. cit., p. 64.

the time came, the gentle monks of the Charterhouse were to go to their martyrdom (as Thomas More imprisoned in the Tower and himself awaiting death, observed to his daughter), ' as joyfully as bridegrooms to their wedding'.

As to the nunneries, the Bridgetines may be said to have been the counterparts of the Cistercians, for they were distinguished by their austerity and piety. The adverse criticism of the sisterhoods has never been as bitter as that levelled at friars and monks; nor were they often accused of the more serious moral lapses, rather they were pointed out for their vanity, laziness and self- indulgence. The case of Saint Radegund's , a nunnery dissolved in 1496 by Bishop Alcock, for the 'negligence and improvidence and dissolute disposition and incontinence of the religious women... by reason of the vicinity of Cambridge University' is a rarity. (10)

The authoritative works written by Miss Eileen Power on the conditions of English nunneries, covering a span of three hundred years before the Reformation, bring out that the greatest problems posed to the Episcopal Visitors were created by the vanity of the nuns, their constant bickerings and squabbles (what today would be called 'personality clashes'), and by the nuisance caused, within and without the convents, by the pets kept by the religious. This, of course, was nothing new. In the thirteenth

---

10. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 73

century Ancrene Riwle had advised the anchoresses: 'Ye shall not possess any beast, my dear sisters, except only a cat', (very likely for reasons of utility, since cats were, in medieval times, not regarded as pets but merely as destroyers of rodents). The maintenance of the still more useful cow presented divers problems, for then the anchoress 'must think of the cow's fodder, and of the herdsman's hire, flatter the heyward, defend herself when her cattle is shut up in the pinfold, and moreover pay the damage'. Besides, sternly added the devotional manual , ' Christ knoweth, it is an odious thing when people in the town complain of anchoresses' cattle! '. (11)

Madame Eglantyne, seen by Chaucer en route to the most popular shrine in the realm, Saint Thomas a Becket's in Canterbury, had in her company three priests in charge of the spiritual supervision of her house, and a companion nun, but also, not to be left behind at the convent, there were 'foure smale houndes' to which she was singularly attached, that were fed on roasted flesh and milk and wastel bread at the Tabard Inn, and presumably, along the road. The poem does not mention that these same four lap-dogs later entered Canterbury Cathedral itself - after all, the Tales are unfinished- but it is very possible. For it was the custom of the age for people to take animals to church with them, (a practice no one strenuously objected

11. Ancrene Riwle , Gems of Prose, p. 16

to if the pets were well behaved), but there is, to cite one instance set down in a Bishop's Register, the case of Lady Audley, a lay boarder at a convent, who, as many other noblewomen before and after her, for a fee welcome in the community's coffer or for a 'corrody' perhaps, used and oftentimes abused conventual hospitality. She took with her 'as many as twelve dogs at once', these making, the complaint reads, 'great uproar in Church, hindering the nuns in their psalmody'. (12)

That the nuns themselves were sometimes guilty of this misdemeanour, an injunction sent by William of Wykeham, in 1387, to the Prioress of Romsey Abbey bears evidence:

> 'Item, we have convinced ourselves by clear proofs that some of the nuns of your house bring with them to church birds, rabbits, hounds and such like frivolous things, whereunto they give more heed than to the offices of the church, with frequent hindrance to their own psalmody and to that of their fellow nuns and to the grievous perils of their souls - therefore we strictly forbid you all and several, in virtue of the obedience due to us that ye presume henceforwards to bring to Church no birds, hounds, rabbits, or other frivolous things that promote indiscipline... Item, whereas through hunting dogs or other hounds abiding within your monastic precincts the alms that should be given to the poor are devoured and the church and cloister are... foully defiled... and whereas through their inordinate noise divine service is frequently troubled - therefore we strictly command and enjoin you, lady Abbess, that you remove the dogs altogether and that you suffer them never henceforth, nor any such hounds, to abide within the precincts of your nunnery' (13)

---

12. Linc. Visit. II pp. 3-4 quot. Power, E., Medieval People.
13. Power, E., Medieval English Nunneries, p. 307.

Not only were the familiar domestic animals kept, also, more rarely, the exotic and bright-hued popinjays, first brought home to England by returning crusaders, (14) and monkeys, 'apes and japes and marmusettes tayled' imported, with other things of 'complaisance' by Venetian and Florentine merchants to find a ready sale and their way to ladies in their bowers or nuns in their cloisters. (15)

Madame Eglantyne was not an exception, but a normal example of these high-born religious - which comprised the majority - for "ladies and rich burgesses' daughters got into the convents but poor low-born girls never." (16) The nuns came from one social group, the highest, as no other alternative to the nunnery was possible for the maiden of gentle birth for whom a suitable marriage could not be arranged.

A picture drawn from life is Chaucer's Prioress, with her 'smile full simple and coy', her well-pleated wimple, placed high to leave her fair forehead bare, an infringement of the Rule, certainly, yet a concession to the contemporary fashion, as were those little additions to brighten the drabness of her habit: the beads 'of coral gauded all in grene' and the pendent brooch of 'gold full shene' bearing the ambiguous inscription AMOR VINCIT OMNIA. This, Miss Power's researches reveal, for she found, she

---

14. Mitchell and Leys, A History of the English People, p. 181
15. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 75.
16. Power, E., Medieval People, p. 84.

tells us, "Madame Eglantynes at every turn", as another complaint, to the Bishop of Lincoln (c. 1450) shows:

> The Prioress wears golden rings exceeding costly, with divers precious stones and also girdles silvered over and silken veils and she carries her veil too high above her forehead, so that her forehead, being entirely uncovered, can be seen of all, and she wears furs of vair. Also she wears shifts of cloth of Rennes, which costs sixteen pence the ell. Also she wears kirtles laced with silk and tiring pins of silver and silver gilt and has all the nuns wear the like. Also she wears above her veil a cap of estate, furred with budge. Item, she has on her neck a long silken band, in English a lace, which hangs down below her breast and there on a golden ring with one diamond. (17)

Valuable and revealing as are Episcopal Registers to the historian, it should be added, they tell but part of the tale by never including praises, only violations of the rules; thus, of numerous religious houses running in excellent order no mention could be made other than a brief: 'All is well'.

It has been noted that towards the end of the period, there being no possibility for a woman of rank to obtain gainful employment, or indeed any employment whatsover outside her home, nunneries were functioning, for the vocationless, merely as "aristocratic spinsters' clubs" which could not have been conducive either to zeal or to austerity. (18) In the lower ranks of society a woman had wider scope for her activity, were she maid, wife or widow, contemporary records show. She is found working

---

17. Ibidem, p. 89.
18. Myers, op. cit., p. 65.

as domestic servant, embroiderer, laundress, sempstress... There is mention of "Matilda the lead-beater... Gundreda the pudding-wife... Alice the wigmaker... and Agnes the book-binder." A few of the more enterprising even found a way to open the tightly shut door of the gilds and to practise crafts traditionally reserved for men by becoming members, with full duties (and almost all privileges), of the Tailors of Salisbury and the Dyers of Bristol. Others set up booths at fairs, or acting as 'chapmen', sold their wares about the countryside. Still others, in some rural districts, helped to till the soil, brew ale, or thatch roofs... (19)

Again, Chaucer, while generous in giving details of habitation and diet of his 'povre widow, somdel stape in age', who dwelt in a small cottage with her three daughters, says nothing of the way the members of this strictly feminine menage earned their livelihood. But because of the importance of the rising wool-trade, it may be surmised that they, like Bathsheba, oftenwhile laid their hands to the spindle and held in their hands the distaff. Spinning was so general an occupation for women staying at home, that it gave rise to the term 'spinster' as equivalent to the unmarried.

A lady enjoyed little freedom of action. Despite the idealization of womanhood in chivalric poetry - an

---

19. Mitchell and Leys, op. cit., pp.133,148,160.

off-shoot of the Marian cult - by medieval law and by medieval custom a woman was no more than a chattel to be disposed of as her overlord or her male relatives saw fit. Early feudal rules required that even the lesser tenants of a demesne, were they villeins, bordars or cottars, show their fealty to the seigneur by a payment in money or kind whenever a beast was sold or a daughter married. (20) Nevertheless, the 'custom of the manor', binding as any law, held back the lord from asking a price so steep as to make marriage or sale unfeasible.

In upper social spheres, the wedding of an heiress became a matter of some interest to the liege lord or all, whose 'honor', in the last analysis, was the entire realm of England. Therefore, the King could (and very often did) transfer to the highest bidder rights and privileges 'in his gift', as the wardship of minors... and could heavily tax the estates of widows. True, the status of widow - such were the dictates of common law - brought with it something nearing equality with man in the disposal of person or property. (21) But before the dower rights could revert to a widow, or she hold the estate, a fine must needs be paid to the Crown, often so extortionate as to oblige her to make a disadvantageous or even distasteful re-marriage. The Magna Charta leaves no room for doubt that this state of affairs was a cause

---

20. Bonham-Carter, V., The English Village, p. 41.
21. Bindoff, op. cit., p. 26.

of resentment on the part of the Barons: one of the 'liberties' defended at Runnymede was that heirs of noble houses should not be 'disparaged' by the King, that is to say, be made to marry an inferior in rank; another, extracted from the King a promise that widows should not be compelled to marry if they desired to live husbandless.

Child marriages were the rule. Some parents, it has been noted, (22) preferred to arrange a suitable match for their heirs in childhood, forestalling in the event of their own death, the ill chance of a royal wardship. The other extreme of age, senectude, seems not to have hampered operations in the marriage mart. What Lady Stenton considers " a typical entry" in the 'Roll of ladies, boys and girls of twelve counties' (anno 1185) reads: 'Sybil of Harlton, who was daughter of Roger de Gigney, is in the King's gift and she is 70 and over. She has Harlton of the honor of Giffard and 10 pounds worth of land... and (besides the heir) that lady has 9 children.' (23)

The 'amour courtois' was a thing fit for romance, the reality quite another; so the honourable seclusion afforded by convent walls and a life spent in the company of social equals must have seemed to many much the better part. All in all, the problem of the redundant woman,

---

22. Mitchell and Leys, op. cit., p.41.
23. Stenton, Doris Mary, English Society in the Early Middle Ages, p. 74.

to use a term of a later day, was solved in a manner not altogether unpleasant for the person immediately concerned, there being some prestige attached to the religious state. To no other person on the pilgrimage to Canterbury does the keeper of the Tabard Inn accord such courteous treatment as to the Prioress: it is the deference due to a lady born. Besides, (a boon for those lacking true vocation) the enclosure was not always rigorously enforced; it might be lightened by an occasional journey to a shrine or even by a protracted visit to family estates, as in the case of the 14th century Abbess of Shaftesbury who obtained dispensation of a whole year's absence from her abbey to 'reside in her manors for the sake of air and recreation'. (24)

On the other hand, doubtless many a girl who professed did so to lead a life of quiet, prayer and meditation. If she desired an extreme isolation from the world, permission might be granted her to live alone, perhaps in a cell close to some church. Dame Juliana of Norwich, the mystical recluse of the late middle ages, is an instance of this; she dedicated some of the time passed in solitude to writing the religious tracts which have made her name famous.

Only one religious order, the Gilbertine, originated in England. Established in 1135, it never spread beyond

---

24. Mitchell and Leys, op. cit., p. 41.

the boundaries of the Kingdom; within them, it grew, flourished and was in good repute when it was suppressed by the Reformation. St. Gilbert of Sempringham has been credited with reviving a monastic system of earlier times, for his was, like Fontevrault, a double order, the communities of men and women living side by side, the former following the Benedictine Rule, the latter, the Augustinian. Yet the idea of a double community was a development, not the first intention of the founder, whose greatest care was for the welfare, both spiritual and physical, of the nuns. And his efforts were directed towards providing a needed haven for women desiring to lead the life of the cloister. So that the nuns, who were the first installed, could attend undisturbed to their devotions, lay sisters were added to care for the things of Martha, then lay brothers to till the fields, and, lastly, to perform spiritual offices, a community of priests and clerics. The special constitutions of the Gilbertines were very carefully drawn; they stipulated that while the Head of the combined Order should be a priest, (all were Canons Regular), the property was to remain in the ownership of the nuns.

In contrast with the cultural attainments of some monks and friars, the nuns were not distinguished for their learning. There is no evidence to show that

an English nunnery ever contributed to history or to letters by compiling a chronicle, nor any indication that a sisterhood accumulated a library worthy of the name. To take the veil it was not requisite for a novice to know how to write, it sufficed that she should be able to say the Holy Office by rote. (25) Equally negative would be the contribution of nunneries to Art, were it not for their excelling in the handicraft of embroidery. Works of remarkable artistic merit were produced by nuns, examples of which are still to be found in museums from the Scandinavian peninsula to the Iberian.*

The craft of embroidery was an old one in Britain. At least a century and a half before Eleanor of Acquitaine set her ladies to record the salient incidents of the Conquest in the Bayeux Tapestries, work of consummate skill had been done by native English. Fragments of embroidery of metal thread on silk that have withstood time's destructive action, found in episcopal tombs, are

---

25. Mitchell and Leys, op. cit. p. 64

* The embroidery was not done by nuns exclusively. We have, in this connection, the authoritative opinion of Messers A.F. Kendrick and Alan S. Cole:

> "Much of the work was done in convents, but old documents show that in monasteries also were to be found men excelling in needlework. Other names, both of men and women are recorded, showing that the craft was by no means exclusively confined to monastic foundations. Gilds of embroiderers existed far back in medieval times."
>
> ("Embroidery": A.F. Kendrick and A.S. Cole.)

proof sufficient of the ability of the embroiderers. There are, for example, the remnants of needlework dating from the 10th century, taken from Saint Cuthbert's grave at Durham and known to be pieces of vestments made by order of Queen Aelfflaeda for the Bishop of Winchester, Friedestan.

Of the Opus Anglicanum, deservedly renowned and highly prized throughout western Europe, two phases are distinguishable. The first displays great imaginative force, fine design and delicate colouring; the silken strands of the embroidery being predominantly yellow, shading to green, white to blue. In the second, gold thread abounds and rich tones of velvet serve as background to offset the figures or ornaments. Padding is used to give the embroidery relief, and the motifs: angels or unicorns or thistles... are stereotyped, nonetheless the effect is sumptuous and beautiful.

As might be supposed much embroidery was intended for the adornment of church vestments. One masterpiece of the art, the superb Syon Cope of the thirteenth century, reproduces a number of scenes from the Bible and the lives of saints; it depicts the victory of the Archangel Michael over the dragon; Christ meeting Mary Magdalene; His crucifixion; the death and burial of the Virgin... In this cope, it is interesting to note, secular as well as ecclesiastic

elements appear, for the broad orphrey of the vestment has many heraldic shields of arms. To reproduce these devices bright skeins in vert, azure or gules were used. Other needlework ornamented the garments of kings, courtiers, and even lesser men. It is not needful to look far for an example of this last, merely to glance again at the young squire, one of the famous and merry company always on the canter towards the Cathedral shrine, for his doublet, it can be seen at once, is

> embrouded ... as it were a mede,
> all ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.(26)

If the nunneries, then, did nothing to deepen knowledge, they did help to extend learning, and their abrogation dealt a direct and serious blow to elementary education, for in many a religious house, children of rich and poor alike were given instruction. (27) Girls were the more affected, since rarely did parents themselves teach their daughters at home, the only other available source of instruction had been the schools attached to the convents. It is known that some girls in their first years attended the 'apeseyes' but custom did not allow them to progress to the Grammar Schools, by tradition reserved for boys.

---

26. Chaucer, The Prologue, Canterbury Tales
27. Cambridge History of English Literature, "The Dissolution of the Religious Houses", Benson, R.H., p. 50.

REGULAR AND SECULAR CLERGY

'Merry sungen the monkës in Ely
When Cnut King rowed thereby
Row, cnichts, near the land
And hear we these monkës sing.

From the tenth until the twelfth centuries - and even before - the monasteries held aloft the torch that illumined the intellectual and spiritual life of England. Yet, vital as was the role of early monachism in the preservation and extension of learning and the development of art, to the monk, for the most part secluded within his monastery walls, the primary concern was to serve God and to save his own soul, by means of a life in which was alternated prayer, work and meditation. External works, whether temporal or spiritual, were accidental, since the life of the cloister was adopted as a means to obtain personal salvation, not to compass some other end. But if to the monk attachment to his monastery was a virtue, the friar's ideal was detachment from his, and his missionary work took him constantly into the outer world. Therefore, it was the friar who was to exercise the greatest influence, directly, as an individual, on the people.

The Mendicant Orders, Dominicans, Carmelites, Augustinians and Franciscans arrived in England in the middle of the thirteenth century. These last, especially,

soon filled a dire social need of the time, with which the parish system could no longer adequately cope. For besides spreading the gospel by preaching and by example, the disciples of St. Francis took under their care the neglected, the outcast, the diseased... They ministered to the physical as well as to the spiritual needs of the people. They preached in a simple way that ordinary men could understand. Indeed, the friars set up a high standard of preaching that, later, Protestant evangelists, whether Lollards or Wesleyans, strove to emulate.

Soon after their arrival, throughout the length and breadth of the country the friars became familiar and well-loved figures. The very popularity the Regular Orders enjoyed was contributory to their abandoning some of the ascetic ideals. For, from early times, by willing donations, the laity had shown its veneration for the Church and admiration for the clergy, and provided the means not only to construct and to maintain the religious houses, but also a surplus that, cumulatively, grew to be great wealth. So that, at the time of the Dissolution, the value of Abbey lands is reckoned as having been from one fifth to one third of all the wealth in the kingdom. (28) Increasingly priors and abbots were involved in the secular cares of the land-owner, more and more the churchman was becoming a man of business and acquiring faults and

---

28. Belloc, H., op. cit., p. 95.

weaknesses , which his religious status made loom the larger, and which his Church, as usurious, condemned.

Considering the matter from the point of view of the economist, Professor Tawney comments that the growing complexity of economic civilization confronted the Church with problems not easily solved by its traditional categories, for " the economic realities came into sharp collision with the social theory inherited from the early Middle Ages"; then, the Church "had stood for the protection of peaceful labour... the care of the poor, the unfortunate and the oppressed, the ideal at least, of social solidarity against the naked forces of violence and oppression..." But now, " practically, the Church was an immense vested interest implicated to the hilt in the economic fabric, especially on the side of agriculture and land tenure. Itself the greatest of landowners, it could no more quarrel with the feudal structure than the Episcopal Commission, the largest of mineral owners today can lead a crusade against royalties."

There was, he continues, an ever widening gulf between theory and practice, between the idea of the 'natural law' of the schoolmen, and the criterion of economic expediency, a " conception of a rule of life superior to individual desires and temporary exigencies", whose significance lay in "the insistence that society is a spiritual organism not an economic machine, and that economic activity,

which is one subordinate element within a vast and complex unity, requires to be controlled and repressed by reference to the moral ends for which it supplies the material means..." Nevertheless, he adds, the traditional categories, "if applied capriciously, were not renounced"; and, if it is proper to insist on the prevalence of greed in high places, it is not less important to observe that men (still) called these vices by their right names and had not learned to persuade themselves that greed was enterprise and avarice economy." (29)

Undeniably, for many churchmen the bright early vision had dimmed; they no longer had the joy in renunciation that had made Columba, hermit-monk of Aran, deem his wild and wind-swept rock 'Paradise on earth and a garden of God...' and the bleak cell in which he spent many happy hours, with the wind whistling through the loose stone and the sea-spray hanging on his hair, 'the abode of angels...'

In stating the case for the medieval monks to his contemporaries, the Victorians, (no admirers of monastic asceticism), James Anthony Froude asks them to look upon the "silent witnesses" of lives spent in the cloister:

> Whoever loiters among the ruins of a monastery will see, commonly leading out of the cloisters, rows of cellars half under-ground, low, damp, and wretched-looking; an earthern floor, bearing no trace of pavement; a roof from which the

---

29. Tawney, R.H., Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, pp. 55, 56.

> mortar and the damp keep up (and always must have kept up) a perpetual ooze: for a window a narrow slit in the wall, through which the cold and the wind find as free an access as the light. Such as they are, a well-kept dog would object to accept a night's lodging in them; and if they had been prison cells, thousands of philanthropic tongues would have trumpeted out their horrors. The stranger supposes that they were the very dungeons of which he has heard such terrible things. He asks his guide, and his guide tells him they were the monks' dormitories. Yes, there on the wet soil, with that dripping roof above them, was the self-chosen home of those poor men. Through winter frost, through rain and storm, through summer sunshine, generation after generation of them, there lived and prayed, and at last laid down and died. (30)

Undeniably there is a perceptible change from the first period to the last. Even the Friars Minors, taught by the Umbrian saint that unschooled simplicity was desirable and learning but a trammel to the free development of the spirit, began to interest themselves in academic studies, entered the universities and distinguished themselves as scholars in fields scientific, philosophical and medical. They, too, who had practised the utmost personal poverty by having only the barest means of subsistence, no lands, no funded property, no fixed source of income, were attracted by the lure of material possessions. They erected great priories and amassed valuable libraries.

The wealth lavished on the religious houses of monks and friars made it possible for them to build abbeys and churches that filled England, says Professor Trevelyan enthusiastically, "with towering forests of

---

30. Froude, J.A., "Monastic Asceticism".

masonry of which the beauty and grandeur has never been rivalled either by the Ancients or the Modern". And this architectural activity, save for a brief pause during the scourge of the 'Great Murrain', went on unabated through the centuries to produce the beautiful and original varieties of the English Gothic, the Decorated, the Flamboyant, and the Perpendicular. In the new trend of architecture there were signs of the rising nationalism. The English master masons, by giving play to their native genius, showed an independence of European models and enriched the older Gothic elements by treatments of window-traceries, mouldings and carvings as sophisticated as they were luxuriant. (31)

It is doubtless significant, that towards the end of the medieval period, the laity who had heretofore given with such open-handed generosity for the construction of cathedrals and abbeys, began to divert their endowments to the founding of parish churches, chapels and chantries -these last quite as much to perpetuate the memory of the donors as to intercede for the salvation of their souls.

31. Pevsner, Niklaus, " English Architecture in the Late Middle Ages", The Age of Chaucer, p. 229

THE SECULAR CLERGY

While it has been estimated that in pre-Reformation England there was at least one cleric for every hundred of the adult population, this does not mean all the members of the ecclesiastical body performed duties exclusively sacerdotal; many were employed as administrators, teachers, servants of the State... As the Church was an open road, the only one, by which a young man of talent (since a humble birth, or even an illegitimate one was not an insurmountable barrier) might reach success in civil life, many a youth chose to follow it regardless of whether or not he felt any true vocation for the religious calling.

On the lower rungs of the hierarchical ladder were the parish and the chantry priests. The first, as 11th century records attest, held a near-villein status; to him was allotted a virgate, a half-hide, or a hide as one of the villein shareholders of the town, although his priestly duties exempted him from the common tillage of the soil. (32)

The villein's lot, it should be mentioned in passing, from Norman times perhaps, at any rate by the late Middle Ages, had not been as hard as that of the

---

32. Vinogradoff, Eleventh Century, p. 455.

peasant in some Continental countries. (33) Jacques Bonhomme fared much worse than did John Nameless or John the Miller; for law and custom, on the Isles, alleviated the burden. In England, feudal stratification was never carried out as far as in Europe. In theory, the difference between pure and privileged villeinage was established; in practice the various degrees of peasantry mingled so that the successful tenant farmer was not easily distinguishable, in social standing, from the franklin, or freeholder. The distinction was one more legal than economic also, for by the fourteenth century there were villeins who were rich men. (34) And from the fusion of these farmer stocks sprang the yeoman, who so stoutly bent his body to the bow to win victory at Crécy or at Agincourt.

In popular feeling towards the parish clergy there was more sympathy than animosity, perhaps because as far as worldly goods were concerned the parish priest had little to excite the envy of his brethren or the condemnation of his contemporaries. Chaucer is only reflecting public opinion when he makes the 'povre parson of a toun, riche in hooly thought and werk' serve as foil for the cupidity of monk and friar. The nine

---

33. Stubbs, Constitutional History, p. 405.
34. Tawney, op. cit., p. 57.

thousand parishes of the kingdom were centres of active community life, secular and religious. There parish feasts and parish ales brought together all classes of villagers or townsmen to whom the local church was a source of pride; there the parson performed his religious duties, conscientiously it may be or lightly, obliged as he was to eke out his living by labour in the fields. He was close to the soil and close to the folk around him, whose good qualities and shortcomings were no doubt his own.

And the Reformation, in transforming the Roman Catholic priest into the Anglican parson did not effect all at once any change for the better in his way of life or in his social standing. The process of betterment followed an ascending trajectory which took centuries to show visible results.

The picture painted by Lord Macaulay of the seventeenth century lower clergy is depressing. Then a celibate country parson serving as chaplain in the house of a rural gentleman would be accommodated in a tiny garret and receive as salary ten pounds a year. For this emolument he was asked to serve in the capacity of groom, errand boy or gardener; he was expected to content himself with the plainest of fare, to disappear

from the table before the dessert was served, and to return when "he was summoned to give thanks for the repast from a great part of which he had been excluded". (35)

If a divine married, the advowson of his living was insufficient to care for the needs of his family. Then "holes appeared more and more plainly in the thatch of his parsonage and in his single cassock. Often it was only by toiling in the glebe, by feeding the swine, and by loading dung-carts that he could obtain his daily bread.... His children were brought up like the children of the neighbouring peasnatry. His boys following the plough and his girls going out to service..."(36)

Not until Jane Austen's England do we find a Mr Collins consorting, on terms approaching social equality, with a Lady de Bourgh.

But to return. The medieval higher prelacies offered attractive revenues, the important Sees even princely ones; to these the able sons of aristocratic houses were drawn, the Poles, the Staffords or the Bourchiers, to these aspired the talented sons of the poor, as did Wolsey, who received the tonsure only to advance in civil life. Under the Plantagenets the state officers of any consequence were high clerics; they were named Chancellors, Treasurers, Lord Keepers of the Privy Seal... for

---

35,36. Macaulay, Lord: "The Country Gentry and the Clergy of the Seventeenth Century", England and the English

the literate men were churchmen.

Besides pluralism, absenteeism was the most grievous sin committed by the higher ranks of clergy, for away from their Sees they often were and for long periods of time. Today some place-names of London serve as reminders that in the capital city the Bishops of Winchester or of Ely had permanent residences, the more conveniently to attend upon their sovereign.

It was with a good grasp of the situation that Henry VIII abolished the Regular Branch, whose members were representatives of the old cosmopolitan order and directly responsible to the Pope, preserving the Secular Branch under his Supreme Headship since traditionally the bishops recognized him as leader and they were likely to adapt themselves to the great changes instituted by the Crown.

The antecedents for the King's dominion were rooted in the past. Between a.d.688 and 1050, for instance, there were three hundred and six bishops consecrated, all chosen by the King, the Witan and their own Chapters without any Papal interference whatsoever. (37) Theoretically Cathedral Chapters elected the episcopate, in practice Pope and King (especially the latter) had the ultimate decision, and they oftentimes overpassed

---

37. Coulson, G.G., Medieval Panorama, p. 33.

the elections instead of confirming them. St. Augustine had effectively opened a breach for Roman Jurisdiction in England which was widened by the centuries until Henry abruptly closed it up again.

When the question of investitures, so much disputed in all Europe, came up in England: Who should appoint the bishops, Pope or King? It had been answered, after vigorous argument on both sides, by a compromise - the Pope should invest bishops with the symbolic crozier and ring while to the monarch appertained the right to exact their fealty as barons. So Lords Spiritual were, in a sense, Lords Temporal, enmeshed in the web of political affairs.

WYCLIFFE AND LOLLARDRY

The waning of the Middle Ages brought out more strongly in Europe what had existed before as an under-current - and a contradiction - in religious life: "an avowed contempt of the clergy side by side with a very great respect for the sacerdotal office". (38)

In England, at any rate, the anticlerical note sounds clear. By the fourteenth century, using the vernacular language, already rich enough for the highest literary expression, the great writers were outspokenly criticizing the folly and the worldliness of churchmen. Gower could say of the friars, 'Incest, flattery and hypocrisy and pandering to vices, these are the qualities that have raised their minsters, their steeples and their cloisters!' And Langland's shafts were barbed; while Chaucer, milder by nature, tempered his criticism with humour. Yet there was no manifest desire in them to diverge from the path of orthodoxy. However much they might rail at churchmen, they had no quarrel with the Church. This was true, in the main, of the people until the appearance of Lollardry which, channelling the existing antisacerdotalism, turned it into a movement both schismatic and nationalistic.

---

38. Huizinga, Johan, The Waning of the Middle Ages, pp.180-181.

The Oxonian don and cleric, John Wycliffe, began his career in 1366, by presenting a thesis to prove that England was not under any obligation to pay tribute to the Pope. A decade later he was endeavouring to undermine the very foundations of the Papacy itself. Then he was asking, did not the corruption and wickedness of the Papal Government serve to evidence that its authority could not proceed from God? Its power was Caesarian merely, derived from the Caesars of Rome, not from Christ through Peter.

First, he provided the Crown with a needed argument to refuse payment of the tribute promised a century and a half before by King John to the Holy See. Afterwards, in reply to a Parliamentary inquiry as to whether the nation would be justified in not making the payment known as 'Peter's Pence' to Rome, Wycliffe took the stand that as such contributions were charitable acts they could not be compulsory, especially if the State were in need. These views supporting the economic independency from Rome brought him popular support as well as the approval of the Crown and of the strong Lancastrian court party. (For, even at this early date, it was notorious that the group were casting covetous eyes at the rich Church properties as possible spoils.) (39)

---

39. Trevelyan, History of England, p. 250.

The lifework of Wycliffe comprehends aspects political, theological and evangelical. It is likely, his concern at the start was political rather than dogmatic, and that he himself did not realize the full length of the road he was to traverse would lead him to an open break with the established Church. It is a moot question whether he was initially spurred to action by his intimate knowledge of and sympathy with the Government's policies, that is to say, by the political and not the theological consideration. Loserth's investigations show that Wycliffe reflected this trend in politics rather than exerted his own original and conscious thought on the public mind.*

Wycliffe is not always doctrinally clear nor can he be said to possess all the Protestant virtues ascribed to him by apologists. Nevertheless there is enough in his writings, expressed or implied, to make him well deserving of the name, "The Rising Star of the Reformation" given him by posterity, for through Huss

---

* J. Loserth , in Die Genesis von Wicliffs Summa Theologiae proves that Wycliffe developed his doctrine of dominium or Lordship as an anticurial attack some eight years after he had defended the Government's economic interests, and that these same ecclesiastico-political difficulties provided him with arguments he later developed, i.e. some of the propositions of his great treatise, De Civili Dominio were taken bodily from the one hundred and forty titles of the bill touching upon ecclesiastical abuses introduced at the " Good Parliament" of 1376. (Poole and Phillips, " Wycleffe", Enc. Brit. pp. 867,868.)

Huss , his ideas influenced Luther and others. He, in his turn, was cognizant of the doctrines of Marsilius of Padua, who argued that the Pontiff should not wield temporal power and that Church and State be virtually separate; as also he was indebted to Bishop Fitz Ralph's teachings that lordship is conditioned by grace although the earlier doctrine -which in the writings of the Doctor Profundus is limited- was extended in scope by Wycliffe to include all civil and ecclesiastical society.

By stages Wycliffe reached his conception of the kingly office, for at the onset he had not found it objectionable that there should be a Roman head of the Church, if this head, by his righteousness could be qualified as of the elect. Then the Great Schism came with its consequent loss of Papal prestige to intensify his hostility and he branded the Pope, 'the Antichrist itself! ' (40) He came to regard instead the King as the true Vicar of Christ not only in temporal matters alone, but in religious , for royal jurisdiction embraced all causes. This as expressed in De Officio Regis would seem to accord with the idea of theocratic national kingship as afterwards implanted by Henry VIII. From the King the bishops derive their jurisdiction: Episcopi sui officiales et curati sui, tenentur in qualicunque tali cause spiri

40. "Wycliffe", Oxford Companion to English Literature .

tualiter cognoscere auctoritate regia; ergo rex per illos. Sunt enim tales legii homines regis. (41)

Wycliffe does not definitely state that the King should head the Church, nevertheless his argument points in the direction of Erastianism. At the same time, the reformer, contradictorily, appeals to a direct relationship between man and God without the aid of intermediaries, as for example: 'each man that shall be damned shall be damned by his own guilt, and each man that shall be saved shall be saved by his own merit'. So Dean Rashdall can reach the conclusion that since Wycliffe "asserts very emphatically the priesthood of the laity he could not have been Erastian", while Professor Trevelyan's opposite interpretation is that if, in the strict sense of the word, Wycliffe was not Erastian, the tendency of his argument is to make the King head the Church. But, he adds, " the stress he lays on the individual conscience or priesthood of every lay person would have left him dissatisfied with the Tudor solution." (42)

Drawing from the familiar medieval framework of life, Wycliffe compared God to a supreme overlord who grants, in fief, to his creatures earthly possessions, subject to their faithful performance of his works.

---

41. Poole and Phillips, op. cit. quoted. p. 869
42. Trevelyan, op. cit., p. 248.

As in feudalism, there is a distinction between lordship and possession. Lordship is conditioned by grace, therefore a sinful clergy forfeits the right to exercise it and to possess property. Then, the politici, or statesmen, as God's stewards in temporal matters may lawfully take from an unrighteous clergy - no longer worthy of the privilege of lordship - goods and endowments. Wycliffe, it is true, when asked if he considered that the Church was then in a position to be despoiled did not commit himself in any categorical way. (43)

From the traditional belief of the Roman Catholic Church in free will, Wycliffe is not distant; never did he reach the Predestinatarian conclusion of Calvin. Indeed. Predestination would have been inacceptable to the English reformer who held the doctrine of arbitrary divine decrees anathema. God does not foreordain sin, for He only wills that which has being, and sin is the negation of being. And, basing himself on the Aristotelian distinction between that which is necessary absolutely and that which is necessary on a given supposition, he concludes that God obliges man to perform actions in themselves neither right nor wrong, they only become right or wrong through the free volition of man. (44)

The teachings of Wycliffe on the significance

---

43. "Wycliffe", Poole and Phillips.
44. Ibidem.

of the Eucharist took him openly into the field of heterodoxy. He scathingly denounced Transubstantiation calling it 'a blasphemous folly which leads the people to commit idolatry'.

In contrast to the violence of his language (and judging by the extreme conclusions reached by later reformers) Wycliffe's doctrinal changes seem, in truth, but mild, although they were revolutionary for the times. He would have disagreed with Zwingli that the celebration of the Lord's Supper should be an act of faith and of commemoration merely. Had not Christ himself said, Hoc est corpus meum? The real presence Wycliffe did not deny, what he could not bring himself to affirm, what he 'dared' not affirm is that the Lord's body is corporeally touched and broken, for in the consecrated bread it is present only sacramentaliter , spiritualiter et virtualiter , therefore is not in body, essence, identity and substance the body and blood of Christ. (45) Thus, more than a century before the birth of Luther, Wycliffe enunciated a doctrine approaching Consubstantiation - that Christ's words of institution signify His flesh and blood coexist in and with the natural elements.

While Wycliffe's aristocratic patrons could well approve of his challenging the temporal power of the Pope, and his criticizing the 'possessionate'and'Caesarian'

---

45. Ibidem.

clergy because these ideas coincided with their inclinations and suited their ends, (there is a perceptible anti-curial tendency in English politics from the time of Edward I onwards, manifested in the Statutes of Praemunire and of Provisors), they were not disposed to follow him into heresy, and heresy beyond doubt it was to assail a fundamental dogma of the medieval Church.

The rift between Wycliffe and his former supporters was further widened by the destructive Peasants' Revolt, which, alarming them, caused them to range themselves frankly on the side of conservatism. In the ensuing Lollard repression some, unrepenting, bravely went to the stake, others recanted, and still others, adhering to their beliefs, hid them. Wycliffe, condemned by an ecclesiastical court for his schismatic doctrines, was nonetheless left unharmed and in possession of the benefice of Lutterworth, a Crown gift to him early in his career. From this retreat in Leicestershire he continued, actively, his evangelical campaign by publishing a number of pamphlets in English designed to appeal to the popular conscience. And this Lollard literature was widely if secretly read until well into the Tudor age.

However, the statement that Wycliffe's one creative idea, which, governing all his actions, constituted

his greatest contribution to the Reformation was " the right of the individual to form his opinions on the basis of Scripture and reason and... to carry out these opinions in association with other individuals as seems best to him and to them" (46) needs some qualification. For he proposed definite dogmatic principles, and these, accepted by his followers, gave a certain cohesion and unity to the sect he founded. This emerges from the recorded declarations of those accused of heresy in 1382, for all, with but slight variations, show a common doctrinal position in affirming "that the material substance of bread and the material substance of wine remain in the Sacrament of the altar... that Christ is not in the Sacrament essentially and really, in his own corporeal presence...that it is not laid down in the gospel that Christ ordained the Mass... that if a man be duly penitent any outward confession is superfluous and useless... " *

Very effectively were the tenets of Wycliffism transmitted to the people by a well organized company of wandering preachers, the 'povre prestis', who, with Oxford as a point of departure and of return, were sent along the roads of England to spread the new evangelical message. In imitation of the apostles they went on foot, and, enjoined to practice poverty, they clad themselves in rough russet gowns and carried with them only scrip and staff . Their sustenance was obtained by alms. No religious vow bound the poor priests and no especial training was required of them. Some had studied at

---

46."Lollards", International Encyclopaedia, Vol.XII
* "Propositions of Wycliffe", Documents of Christian Church,242.44

Oxford were clerics; but towards the end of the open missionary work, Wycliffe came to regard learning as needless for preaching the word of God: any unlearned man, 'unus ydiota', if illumined by grace, could reach more hearts than a scholar. All he asked of the laymen preachers was that they lead austere lives and that their piety be deep and sincere.

In the mother tongue, the poor priests preached wherever listeners could be found: in village squares, churches, graveyards, streets or country fairs; then they privately talked to those that had shown interest, thus many were converted. After the Council of Constance, the wayside preachings were suspended and the gatherings became conventicula occulta, for Lollardry, as Erasmus afterwards observed, was 'suppressed but not extinguished'.

Still, to estimate today, with any measure of exactitude, how far Lollard ideas were propagated in England is not easy. Chaucer, in his Shipman's Prologue, said 'Loller' preachings were sowing 'some difficultee' and 'springen cokkel in our clene corn'.* It would seem a few scattered tares in a field of wheat were no serious matter were it not implied that in the manner of tares,

---

* It may be that Chaucer is alluding to the punning association of the word Lollard, with lollium - tares, in a popular song of the day, (c. 1382) 'Lollardi sunt zizania, spinae, vepres ac loccia...' Camb. Hist. Chap. II, p. 47.

Lollardry might spread and invade the country, beyond control. Though the opinion of another contemporary, a chronicler also adverse to the heresy, that almost every other man in England then was a Lollard must have been a somewhat alarmist version. (47)

For over a century, through the Lancastrian period into that of the Tudors, with varying degrees of intensity, the persecution of heretics was carried on, the repressive measures continuing until Henry VIII's reign. Although serious outbreaks of Lollardry were few, there were signs of its existence sufficient to be disquieting, if not actually dangerous, to the ecclesiastical organization of the kingdom. Among the ranks of the lesser clergy Wycliffite ideas had infiltrated; some chaplains, parish priests and rectors were known to be secret sympathisers of the schism (48); in manor house and in cottage, tracts, such as the "Wickette" and the "Lanthorne of Light", were still read surreptitiously; and before Parliament, in 1395, a petition manifestly Lollard in content was presented by the Knights of the Shire which stated that Transubstantiation was a 'feigned miracle', that prayers said over wine, bread, altars, vestments... should be banned as 'magical', and that the King should exercise the '<u>jus episcopali</u>' in order to

---

47. Lindsay, Thomas Martin, "Lollards".
48. ibid.

reform the Church. (49)

Withal, the support given by Parliament to this petition (and to another in the same tenour, later) was not unwavering, for the same body passed, in 1401, the statute of De Haeretico Comburendo, whose primary purpose was the extirpation of heresy. By this act, capital punishment of those convicted passed from the control of the Church - hitherto responsible under Canon Law - to the control of the secular courts. And in the pursuit of this duty the State proved more, not less, rigidly severe than the Church had been. (50)

Besides, other milder measures were taken: to safeguard students at Oxford from the taint of heresy, William of Wykeham founded New College; and the learned but misunderstood Reginald Pecock spent his lifelong energies in a one man crusade to win back the lost sheep to the fold. He tried, quite unsuccessfully, to reclaim them by suasion, appealing to their reason by numerous and lengthy tracts that carefully listed, and refuted, each and every one of the Lollard 'trowings', or as he firmly believed, false opinions.

---

49. Ibid.
50. Whitney, J.P. Cambridge History of English Literature, Chap. II, p. 5[illegible]

THE BIBLE

The history of the Bible shows that renderings of Holy Scriptures into the vernacular were made from Anglo-Saxon times onward. Beginning with Caedmon's poetical paraphrase of the origin of the world and the creation of man, they continued through Bede, Aelfric, Faerman and Oswun, the scholars best known. Besides, there were countless other clerics who, in the course of their ministry, often would make and use in sermons or homilies their own translations or glosses of Biblical passages. So it is, that in the collections extant of these anonymous works no two are identical. And to this common practice Wycliffe himself adhered; he did not quote from the text of the Bible that bears his name but referred directly to the Vulgate. (51)

The time was ripe for a translation of the Bible into what was now the mother tongue, for the East Midland had emerged triumphant over the other island dialects, while French was becoming more and more an alien tongue. Wycliffe, Doctor Evangelicus in sooth for his deep love of Scriptures, felt strongly that the Bible should be accessible to all. Other countries already had versions in the vernacular; why, said he, should not England have its own? To Wycliffe, as

---

51. ibid.

inspirer – if perhaps not participator in the great and scholarly work* – and to his adjutors belongs the credit for the first complete English translation of Holy Writ, a landmark in the history of England and of its religion, and a worthy forerunner of the still greater Bible of King James.

In <u>De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae</u> Wycliffe complained that his evangelists, sent out to preach 'Goddis Worde', had been interfered with; but in this, as in the rest of his writings, there is no mention of any ban having been placed on either translation or reading of the Bible. For, fragmentary as were the existing versions, it was licit for the faithful to read them or the Vulgate – if they were capable of doing so, the Latin being in itself a barrier to comprehension for the ordinary layman.

This absolute liberty was curtailed after the convocation of the clergy at Oxford, under the leadership of Bishop Arundel, in 1382, when it was ordained that, from thence onward, upon pain of greater excommunication, no man might publicly or privately translate any text of

---

* There is no proof absolute that Wycliffe participated in the Biblical translation, although some passages have traditionally been attributed to his pen: the Epistles, the Acts and the Apocalypse. There are too, the express statements of Huss (1411) and of the anti-Wycliffite chronicler Knighton, that the entire Bible was translated by the reformer, but there is no supporting evidence. Vide Henson, Herbert Henley: "The Bible".

Scripture into English or any other tongue; or read any 'book, booklet or tract... composed in the time of John Wycliffe or since... until the said translation be approved by the ordinary of the place, or if the case so require, by the council provincial'. And, if any person should disregard the injunction, he would be punished as a partisan of heresy and error. (52)

On their part, the Lollards soon protested against the prohibition, with some reason: 'worldly clerkis crien that holy writ in Englische wole maken cristen men at debate, and suggetis to rebelle against her sovreyns and therefor' ought not to be 'suffred among lewed men'. (53) As a fount of inspiration and a rule of life - if not as a sole canon of appeal - Wycliffe had stressed the knowledge of Scripture. So its reading came to be recognized as a distinctive practice of his sect. Yet, when the Biblical translations had first appeared, nothing had been done to prevent their diffusion: the most conservative of prelates owned and used the Testaments produced by the Wycliffite group, which, after all, closely adhered to the Vulgate. And even now, the permission required was easily obtainable. The new vigilance was thought necessary in the interests of unity - not because the reading of the Bible was

---

52. Ibid.
53. Quoted Whitmey, op. cit., p. 63.

unorthodox - but rather as a supervision of the great flow of tracts and pamphlets being issued by the zealous Lollards, and also of thitherto irreproachable religious works that, with biased comments and interpolations, were being recopied by them; these interlardings oftentimes were of a "virulently controversial kind". (54)

The importance of the Synod of Oxford in the history of religious dissent in England lies in that it marks the emergence of a definite point of view towards the function of Scripture. For the real issue was the interpretation of the Bible, not its reading merely. The Church of Rome cleaving to its traditional duty in regard to the laity, would act as mediator, counsellor and guide in spiritual things, whereas the new sect would largely dispense with guidance, counsel and mediation by the clergy. This trend was later to be intensified by the European Reformation, the Protestant Churches, in the majority, reaching the conclusion that it was not for the Church to decide on the meaning of Scripture but Scripture to determine what the Church should teach.

Lollardry, by no means extinguished, subsisted for a century and a half as an underground stream. When, on the very eve of the Reformation, Lutheran writings

---

54. Henson, op. cit.

began to circulate in England, Bishop Tunstall in a letter to Erasmus wrote: 'It is no question of pernicious novelty; it is only that new arms are being added to the great band of Wycliffite heretics'. (55) Thus, to the native stream were joined the affluent of Calvinism and the lesser tributaries of Lutheranism and Zwinglianism, and Lollardry cannot but be accounted a conditioning factor that prepared England for the more ready acceptance of changes in Church and State its Reformation would bring.

---

55. Quoted Lindsay, T.M., "Lollards".

THE TUDORS AND RELIGION

> 'It seems his (the King's) marriage with his brother's wife has crept too near his conscience.'
>
> 'No, his conscience has crept too near another lady.'
>
> Shakespeare: Henry VIII

When Henry VIII, for reasons personal and economic primarily, severed the Church of England from the See of Rome, he abolished the Regular Orders, preserving the Secular, saving, as Parliament then proclaimed, the Pope was thenceforward 'the Bishop of Rome with no more authority in the kingdom than any other foreign bishop'.

It is evident that, even at the onset, the King had no intention of introducing any innovation other than the Royal Supremacy, and had no desire to diverge fundamentally from the established order in religion. Protestantism he abhorred. In 1521 he had taken a stand in his <u>Assertio Septem Sacramentorum contra M. Lutherum</u> and he had no mind afterwards to countenance the 'rank and pestiferous heresies' of that 'stubborn monk', Martin Luther; nor had he any sympathy with the ideas of Calvin or with those of the Anabaptists. His subjects were to continue, it was ordered, 'observing

the holy bread and water, creeping to the Cross, and setting up of lights before the Corpus Christi, bearing of candles and the rest...' (56) What a present day historian has said a propos of the Lutheran revolt may, perhaps, be applied to the Anglican secession: "We may dismiss the religious changes incident to the Reformation with the remark that they were not the object sought, but the means of achieving the object". (57)

Little does the majestic, imperious and already cumbersome monarch of the well known painting in the school of Holbein reveal of the Henry, who in the flush and bloom of youth was reckoned one of the handsomest of Renaissance princes. 'His majesty is as handsome as nature could form... exceedingly fair and as well proportioned as possible... affable and benign, he offends no one...' said one observer. (58) Another, the Ambassador Falier, could note as late as 1529, 'In the Eighth Henry, God has combined such corporeal and intellectual beauty as not merely to surprise as to astound all men'. And when he appeared, coruscating in jewels and gold, kingly in demeanour to French eyes in the gorgeous pageant, the Field of the Cloth of Gold, he elicited this praise: '<u>Le Roy d'Angleterre est moult beau prince, et honneste, hault et droit; sa manière douce et benigne, et ... (il a)</u>

---

56. Quot. Willison, George F., <u>Saints and Strangers</u>, p.20.
57. Lea, H.C., <u>Cambridge Modern History</u> I, p. 655.
58. Quoted, Sitwell, Edith: <u>Fanfare for Elizabeth</u>, p. 2

une barbe rousse, assez grande, qui lui advient très bien'. (59)

Besides, the King drew the bow with prodigious force, tirelessly hunted the stag, and excelled in the feats of the tilting-yard. To see him play tennis 'was the prettiest thing in the world'. Superb musician and fine linguist, he could read music on sight and perform ably on the lute, the recorder and the virginals; eloquent in his own tongue, he spoke fluently French and Latin. and less so, Italian. He was patron and student both of the New Learning... For this paragon of princes contemporary laudations abound, in which Erasmus joined.

And, his physical and intellectual attributes aside, he was remarkable, even as a child, for a deep religious nature; he was "definitely pious" and took to ritual with "a positive zest". (60) The Venetian envoy, Giustinian, wrote of the King in his young manhood that he was accustomed to hearing three masses daily - on days that he went hunting - on other days, sometimes five; then he joined the Queen (at the time he still considered himself married to Catherine) for Vespers and Compline.

It is therefore not surprising that his one book, which won for him the title of Defender of the Faith, should have dealt with a religious subject, but

---

59. Quoted, Hackett, Francis: Henry VIII, p. 114
60. op. cit. p.28.

it is rather disappointing that the work was not the product of his pen alone, he having called in for aid and consultation all the outstanding churchmen and scholars of the realm: Fisher, Pace, Lee, Gardiner, Wolsey... Very especially did he seek the advice of Thomas More on Theology and Latin, so that many years afterwards More remembered, 'By his Grace's appointment, and consent of the makers of the same, (that is, the aureus libellus against Luther) I was a sorter out and placer of the principal matters therein contained'. (61)

Withal, Henry was no mean theologian. Cardinal Campeggio, sent to England to preside over the Legatine Court before which the validity of the Aragon marriage was to be considered, found him not only anxious, but fully prepared to argue and to defend his points. 'I believe', wrote the Cardinal to the Vatican, 'that in this case he knows more than a great theologist or canonist', but he aptly added, that not even an angel descending from heaven would be able to convince the King that his marriage was valid. (62)

Cardinal Wolsey's inability to fulfil his master's wishes in the matter of the 'divorce' brought about his downfall, his sudden death from natural causes

---

61. Quoted op. cit. ,p. 123.
62. Quoted op. cit. p. 192.

alone saving him from an ignominious end on the scaffold. At this juncture, two men of great ability in their particular fields, though differing widely in aims and character, were found to help the King in his difficulties: Thomas Cranmer in things theological, Thomas Cromwell in those political and economic; and the wheel, once set in motion, turned with speed.

To break the impasse, produced on the one side by the Pope's refusal to grant the annulment and the King's obduracy on the other, drastic measures were necessary. But before it was fully decided that the ties binding England to the Mother Church should be severed, there were preliminary soundings and probings. First, a group of notables assembled at royal command had sent a warning message to Pope Clement advising him of the dark clouds of danger hanging over the kingdom: should the throne become vacant, there was but the Princess Mary in the direct line of succession – and her birth was by many considered illegitimate. Then, to place on the scales the weight of orthodox opinion against that of the Rota, envoys were commissioned to consult the canonists of the principal universities: of Oxford and Cambridge at home, and of Louvain, Paris, Bourges, Padua... abroad, as to whether it was licit for a man to marry his brother's widow. Grounding themselves on Leviticus, all supported

the King's thesis and replied in the negative; but the canvassing of opinion was effort wasted. Catharine, despite the pressure brought to bear upon her, remained steadfastly convinced her marriage was binding, and the Pope refused to yield. Instead, at Rome, a draft of excommunication or of interdict even was written, affirming the status of the Queen as wife and ordering Henry to give up his concubine within the space of a fortnight. The penalties for failure to comply were, as yet, not stated.

If Henry were placed under a papal ban, Catharine had hoped he would 'not struggle against it, if only for fear of his subjects...' or so she told the Imperial Ambassador privately. She misjudged, however, for all the long years of matrimony, the quality of the King's stubborness when balked; for the pronouncement of the Vatican left him unperturbed; he cared not for it; he was adamant.

Neither did he heed the predictions of Elizabeth Barton, the unfortunate Nun of Kent, who felt it her mission to turn the King from his purpose. When she fell into the throes of divination (or of hysteria) her eyes would start from their sockets so as to lay upon her cheeks, her tongue hang far out of her mouth, and with lips motionless, she was able to produce

intelligible words though unnatural in sound, a voice 'speaking within her belly, as it had been in a tonne', Archbishop Cranmer described it. (63) Then she sternly admonished or spoke sweetly of the joys of heaven or horribly of the pains of hell... so that those who heard her were affrighted.

Nor did the strange portents seen in the heavens make him veer from his course: a giant comet in the eastern sky, perceptible to all, and to some, a blue cross above the moon together with a flaming horse and a flaming sword - things alarming to the common people, and to many placed high at court who gave the auguries serious attention, as tokens of some great mutation to come. No, not even did the dread visitation of the plague, the sweating-sickness of 1532, with its great loss of lives, weaken his will.

An appraisal of the King's character was made by Wolsey, when, on the brink of death and having no further reason to dissemble, he spoke openly to Kingston:

> 'He is sure a prince of royal courage, and hath a princely heart; and rather than he will either miss or want any part of his will or appetite, he will put the loss of one half of his realm in danger. For I assure you that I have often kneeled before him in his privy chamber on my knees the space of an hour or two, to persuade him from his will and appetite; but I could never bring it to pass to dissuade him

---

63. Letter by Archbishop Cranmer, quot. Sitwell, op.cit.p.51.

> therefrom... Therefore... I warn you to be well advised and assured what matter ye put into his head, for ye shall never put it out again.' (64)

And the idea foremost in his mind for some years past had been to marry Anne Boleyn.

In one of the last ecclesiastical ceremonies performed while England was still part of the Universal Church, Thomas Cranmer received the pallium as primate, the See of Canterbury having become vacant by the death of Archbishop Warham. The consecration took place as tradition demanded, with the oath of allegiance to the Pope administered. But, foreseeing he would be called upon to render especial services to the Crown, Cranmer, Erastian at heart, provided for the event - and left a loophole for his conscience - by a prior statement expressed privately, that in swearing fidelity and obedience he would not be inhibited in the performance of any duty he owed his sovereign - to whom he felt himself in greater duty bound.

In one of the first acts of Cranmer's as chief minister of the archiepiscopal court, he won from Convocation the favourable answers to the questions of fact and law relative to the Aragon marriage, the judgment being it had been void from the first, therefore the King was free to marry if he chose. This was a post-facto

---

64. ibid. quot. p.30.

decision for, secretly, some time in January 1532 he had married Anne; so, a new judgment pronounced the Boleyn marriage valid.*

The King, acting throughout with the support of Parliament, placed the stamp of legality on all the different acts which confirmed the full severance of the nation from Rome and hailed him, without any qualification whatsoever, the 'only Supreme Head in earth of the Church of England, called the anglicana ecclesia.'

The Parliament whose decisions did so much to shape the modern history of England sat for the unprecedented length of seven years, and during the eight sessions held accomplished an enormous amount of legislative work comprising the discussion and acceptance of one hundred and thirty statutes, of which a fourth were concerned with the burning issue between Church and State. This Reformation Parliament has been dubbed by historians servile, pliant in the extreme, unconditionally submissive, of slavish disposition even...

The Upper House, it is true, reluctant to accept any changes, was brought round by a novel device: those members favouring the King's measures were asked to range themselves on one side of the House, those in

---

* Later the Archbishop was to revise his own sentence in favour of the Boleyn marriage – on the 23rd of May 1536; so then both of the King's daughters, Mary as well as Elizabeth were branded illegitimate.

opposition, on the other. Not daring to flaunt themselves enemies to the reforms and incur royal displeasure, some of the disaffected ones moved to the approving side and the necessary bills were passed. Thus were the Lords bent to the King's will, and the first public division of the House staged.

But the Commons needed little coercion or none. Largely composed of men of the gentry and of the squirearchy, to further the King's aims did not go against the grain of the Lower House which harboured conspicuous anti-clerical elements. Two years before Luther's protest was heard at Wittenberg, bills against the abuses of the clergy had been proposed in Parliament. Then, too, some members must have been imbued with the spirit of nationalism now sweeping as a tidal wave the entire country.

However, patriotism at this historical moment has been defined as a feeling of loyalty to a Prince as much as to a nation. (65) In Europe national states were in the process of creation in Spain or Portugal or France... and power was becoming concentrated more and more in the hands of Kings. England, earlier than any other transalpine country had achieved a truly national existence by the successful adaptation of the

---

65. Belloc, op. cit. p. 92.

Italian city-state system to her public life. Because "of her small size, firm frontiers, her strong Kings and the predominance of her one great city" she had, says Professor Toynbee, "the compactness and self-consciousness of a city-state writ large." (66)

London had become the heart and intelligence of the nation, exceeding by far all the other cities - mere hamlets in comparison - and not in size alone but in wealth and beauty. That it was 'the flower of cities all' was no vain English boast; it was so adjudged by Western Europe. From the time Caxton's printing press was set up at Westminster, the capital city had become a centre for the diffusion of the written word and a moulder of public opinion. The Tudors bore this well in mind and endeavoured to win the allegiance of the Londoners in difficult times. Elizabeth went as far as to prohibit printing outside of London and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge.

The Renaissance, arriving belatedly on English strands, brought with it many things besides a closer view of the world of Hellas. It gave impulse to a whole new way of life; the middle classes, better educated and increasingly ambitious, were taking part in the vital activities of commerce and of statecraft;

Toynbee, op. cit. p. 257.

the native cloth manufacture was on the rise; ocean paths were being opened into the New World, and the Crown in Parliament was acquiring prerogatives heretofore undreamt of - a power almost unlimited.

The New Learning by shedding its light into the dark corners of the old age turned some ancient beliefs into absurd superstitions; the alchemical 'maistries' for one thing, given serious attention as scientific by friar Bacon, were falling into discredit, and soon they would be the butt of Ben Jonson's satirical wit. King worship had reached a high point and correspondingly so, kingly power, for the men of the time, skeptical now as to the existence of unicorns and of salamanders, found food for their credulity "in the worship of that rare monster, the God-fearing Prince". (67) In the minds of those for whom the ecclesiastical authorities had lost prestige, what more natural and logical than that Christian morality should pass to the guidance of the sovereign? They went as far as to accept the king's right to impose his religious beliefs on his people, according to the principle later to be expressed as cuius regio eius religio.

But above all other motivations for the frank Parliamentary support given the Crown, the lure of gain

---

67. Tawney, op. cit., p. 91

must be taken into account. For the members appertaining to the gentry, the squirearchy and the merchant class stood to benefit by the spoliation of the Church; the more well-to-do by buying monastic properties outright, the less moneyed by forming syndicates for the acquisition and the exploitation of real estate. In effect, vested interests were created which irrevocably bound these merchants, squires and gentlemen to the Tudors and their religious settlements. First Minister Cecil, in Elizabeth's time - whose family was one of those enriched by the transfer - and Mr. Hilaire Belloc in our own, believe this factor to have been the decisive one to ensure the success of the English Reformation. Or, as Professor Trevelyan more cautiously phrases it, "if those Catholic families that purchased Church properties had not done so, it is likely that their children would less often have become Protestants, for the new owners of abbey and chantry lands found themselves and their interest involved in that of the Reformation". (68)

Initially, at the dissolution of the monasteries, the Crown itself came into possession of properties worth then 100,000 pounds a year, and after leasing or selling the rest it gained a million and a half pounds, according to the estimate made by Sir Winston Churchill. (69)

---

68. Trevelyan, Social History, p. 116.
69. Churchill, Sir Winston, A History of the English-Speaking Peoples, Vol. II

Had it been possible for Henry to retain this enormous sum he would have become by far the richest monarch of Christendom, for it has been reckoned that from one fifth to one third of all the wealth in the kingdom came under his ownership.

In 1536 it was thought timely to define the first belief and ceremonial of the Church of England as distinct from that of Rome, and the Ten Articles, 'devised by the kyng's Highness Majestie to stablish Christen quietness' appeared. These, subscribed to by Convocation, in the main adhere to the tenets of the old faith, excepting those relating to Papal supremacy, purgatory, veneration of relics and pilgrimages to the tombs of saints. Specifically, the clergy were asked 'to follow Scripture and not repose their trust... in any other works devised by men's phantasies... as in wandering to pilgrimages, offering of money, candles and tapers to images or relics, or kissing or licking the same, saying over a number of beads, not understood or minded on, or in such like superstition'. (70)

---

70. Robinson, J. H. "The Reformation"

SIXTEENTH CENTURY BIBLICAL VERSIONS

In his excellent History of the English Speaking Peoples of recent publication (1958), Sir Winston Churchill gauges the qualities good and evil of Henry's rule; "the hideous blot on his record (is) that the reign should be remembered for its executions. Two Queens, two of the King's Chief Ministers, a saintly bishop, numerous abbots, monks and many ordinary folk were done to death. Roman Catholic and Calvinist alike were burnt for heresy and religious treason. These persecutions inflicted in a solemn manner by the officers of the law, perhaps in the presence of the Council and even the King himself form a brutal sequel to the bright promise of the Renaissance". (71) But as contributing to the greatness of England, the famous statesman and historian discerningly credits the reign with the strengthening of a popular monarchy, the laying of the basis of a sea power, the revivifying of the Parliamentary institutions and the giving of the English Bible to the people.

Henry VII's court was renowned in Europe for its many learned men, more it was said, than even a university; and the English humanists Colet or Linacre or More, while remaining within the pale of orthodoxy

---

71. Churchill, op. cit., Vol. II

were concerned with relgiion and anxious for a depuration of the Church , so they gave a moral tone to Renaissance scholarship and advocated the study of the Testaments in versions drawn from the Greek and from the Hebrew.

And nurtured in this scholarly milieu of the New Learning, Henry VIII's interest and respect for the Bible may be traced to childhood, although his thirtieth year was reached before he directed his attention towards providing that holy Scripture be 'by great, learned and Catholic persons, translated into the English tongue.' For the purpose he issued a commision of inquiry respecting the expediency and necessity of having both Old Testament and New turned into English.

The Commission returned a discouraging report however for they advised against the translation because of the then unsettled state of religious opinion. By this allusion being made to the infiltration of Protestant ideas and to the unauthorised Scriptural texts being published at the time, distrusted as inaccurate or as frankly schismatic - a fear not altogether groundless, for to the second edition of Tyndale's Testament, for instance, an entire volume of aggressively heretical notes and commentaries had been appended.(72) So it happened that the greatest concern of the episcopate in this decade

---

72. Durant, Will, The Reformation , Chap. XXIII, p. 533

was not to propagate Scriptural knowledge but to suppress it, or at least to control it.

Before long even the most conservative of churchmen were to change their opinions as to the urgent need for an approved vernacular Bible. In view of the immediate danger to uniformity, some decisive action both by Government and by clergy was needful, for the translations clandestinely or independently made, first by Tyndale and after by Coverdale were circulating everywhere and so much in demand they had run into several editions. Besides, on the alert to take advantage of the situation, private enterprise had issued and sold with profit at least three editions more. So, in December 1534, in their turn, the Convocation of Canterbury brought the matter to the King's attention by petitioning his Majesty to 'vouchsafe to decree that Scriptures be translated into English and given to the people according to their learning'. (73)

William Tyndale, to us the great Biblical translator, was known in his day also as a very diligent and outspoken theological pamphleteer , one whom Thomas More - who maintained a lengthy controversy with him- called ' the captain of our English heretics'. Tyndale's extreme views were manifest in the denial of the value

---

73. Qout. Paues and Henson, op. cit.

of the sacraments of baptism and confirmation; in the advocating that every man should appeal to Scripture as sole guide and authority, in the belief that salvation could be attained by faith alone. He held with the Lollards that the Crown should wield power unlimited in order to reform the Church, so despite his schismatic convictions, his conception of the true function of kingship (which coincided with Henry's scheme of things then) led to his being, for a time, supported in secret. When with the same vehemence and sincerity Tyndale disapproved of the King's 'divorce', royal favour was at once withdrawn.

In his student days Tyndale had been a 'German', one of the group that in Cambridge used to meet at the White Horse Tavern to read and to comment upon the teachings of Luther. In his youth, too, he had become convinced of the urgent need for a Bible in the mother tongue, simple, clear, accessible -one that even a weaver, or the boy that drove the plough could understand. Erasmus had been his teacher, and though he went far afield from the teachings of his master, he kept in mind the high ideals of humanism and a reverence for Hebrew and Greek Biblical originals.

To accomplish his self-imposed task he sought aid from Cuthbert Tunstall , Bishop of London, but soon

arrived at the conclusion that 'ther was no rowme in my lorde of londons palace to translate the new testament' and also 'that ther was no place to do it in all englonde'. (74) His life thereafter spent abroad was a long wandering, mostly in flight, though some protection was given him by Protestant sympathisers and help for the publication of his Testament. This, slowly, with ceaseless labour and unflagging zeal he had brought well nigh to completion, all of the New Testament and in part the Old, when, betrayed to the Inquisition in 1526, he was imprisoned at Vilvoorden, Belgium, tried for heresy and condemned, then degraded from holy orders, strangled and his body committed to the flames.

Sound in scholarship, high in literary worth, Tyndale's Testament is notable as well for its independence from other Biblical renderings. Wycliffe's Bible was not consulted and but indirectly mentioned: 'I had no man to conterfet, nether was holpe with englyshe of any that had interpreted the same, (that is, the New Testament) or soche lyke thinge in scripture beforetyme'.(75) Therefore his work is an epochal event in English letters for it was to be the basis of the Authorised Version of 1611. And if "ninety per cent" of the King James Bible is

---

74. Tyndale, William, Preface to Genesis (Parker Society) p. 396.
75. Tyndale, "Epistle to the Reader", New Testament of 1526, quot. Henson and Paues, op. cit.

"unaltered Tyndale" (76), it is to him and not to Wycliffe the credit belongs for the English Bible as we know it today. Instinctively it may be, or intentionally, he chose the familiar phrase, beautiful in its rhythm and simplicity, rather than the ponderous expression customary in earlier religious writings. Certainly no greater tribute can be paid him than that his prose inspired and shaped the literature of the English golden age.

Heeding the clergy's complaints of error in the translation and of heresies in glosses and preface, the King 'brenned' the New Testament in 1527. A strict banning that comprehended all printing, sale, importation and even possession of the prescribed texts, and one thoroughly enforced, it would appear, since of the six thousand copies of the first edition printed at Worms, believed to have been smuggled into the country (77), only three are known to be extant today. Ports were carefully watched and contraband copies confiscated, to be added to the pyres lit before St. Paul's Cross where the heretical works were publicly burnt. Agents were sent to the Continent to buy all procurable Testaments so that they too could be destroyed.

---

76. Durant, Will, The Reformation, p. 534.
77. Ibid.

All this failed to arrest Bible reading, for fresh copies were secretly made in England to replace those consumed. A century and a half before, the Lollard Bibles had been painstakingly copied by hand, now Bishop Tunstall and his aides found it hard to cope with the books produced by mechanical means at home; and as for the purchases abroad – as More remarked, the episcopal money was merely helping to keep the heretical presses running in full force.

Almost inevitably the achievement of Miles Coverdale is matched with Tyndale's and it suffers in the comparison, yet the Coverdale Bible, if undistinguished in scholarship, fulfilled the full measure of the author's intention to make a complete translation of Holy writ for the general public, 'not for the maintenance of any sect'. He drew freely on earlier interpreters, whose diligence and capacity he admired and acknowledged. Besides the Zurich Bible and Luther's, he consulted the Latin version of Pagninus and very probably, the Vulgate.(78)

As both Tyndale's and Coverdale's works had a tremendous success on the book mart, the London publishers, seeing the possibilities of the Bible as a best-seller, put out in 1537, a beautiful edition known as the Matthew Bible. This, purporting to be 'truely

---

78. Paues and Henson, op. cit.

and purely translated into English by Thomas Matthew', was in reality no more than a compilation made by John Rogers -who had worked with Coverdale - and who made use of the Coverdale Bible as well as of the New and the fragmentary Old Testaments of Tyndale.

Archbishop Cranmer found the Matthew Bible more pleasing than others then available, so he gave it a somewhat grudging approval, and the King granted permission for its sale. It should be read by every person 'until such time that we, the bishops, shall set forth a better translation', wrote Cranmer, and he pessimistically added, 'I think this will not be till a day after doomsday'. (79) Fortunately for posterity and for literature the Archbishop was no seer, for the King James Bible was in the offing.

While the episcopate were thus criticising, procrastinating, or contemporising, before bringing themselves to any concerted action, the English Bible found a prominent lay sponsor in Thomas Cromwell, for he having become interested in the matter, with characteristic energy and dispatch arranged the execution of an officially approved text, the Great Bible, to supercede all the already existing ones. Coverdale was placed in charge of the enterprise, which, proving too large

---

79. Quot. Paues and Henson, op. cit.

for the English printers to handle, was entrusted to the famous Parisian printer, Francis Regnault. So in the Lent of 1538, Coverdale crossed the Channel to supervise the work. Again, in this new revision, he referred to English and to Continental versions old and new, excepting Wycliffe's.

In September 1538 the Government formally approved that at least one copy of the Great Bible should be set up in a prominent place in every church in the land, accessible for all to read. On its title page, the King is pictured giving the word of God to Cromwell and to Cranmer, who in their turn, hand it to clerics and to laymen.

With joy and enthusiasm the people received the Bible thus at long last provided; they went in throngs to the metropolitan cathedral and elsewhere to read Scripture or have it read aloud to them. Some of the layfolk, unsatisfied with mere reading soon began to comment upon or try to interpret divers passages. This did not suit the King's intention, and in five years' time, by Christmastide of 1543, in a famous public speech Henry complained the Bible was being 'disputed, rhymed, sung and jangled in every ale house and tavern' in England. Restrictions therefore were in order, and a Parliamentary Act passed stipulating that no artificers, apprentices,

journeymen, husbandmen or labourers – in other words, no man below the yeoman class – and no woman, unless she were noble or gentle, should thenceforth read or use any part of the Bible under pain of fines or imprisonment. (80) Tyndale's version was expressly forbidden, as Coverdale's would be a few years afterwards, in 1546, when it was further enacted that all notes, glosses, or commentaries appearing in other publications of the Bible should be obliterated.

These prohibitions affecting the lowliest and most ignorant of the King's subjects – and the bulk of the population as well – were in truth never rigorously enforced. They seem to have been held out in warning to would-be dissidents of the royal determination to maintain some sort of uniformity within the realm. People might continue to read Scripture, and in all likelihood they did so privately, as long as they kept their peace and their findings to themselves.

In fine, saving for royal supremacy, the religious note at the close of the Henrician reign was one of conservatism, entirely in keeping with the Parliamentary act passed when Papal power was repudiated, to the effect that both King and country were to retain the 'Catholic faith of Christendom'.

---

80. Cf Burnet's Ref., 584, ibid. quot.

It is at this moment the question first arises: should the Anglican Church be considered Catholic or Protestant? For if the modifications made by Henry VIII in creed were but slight, he had placed the Anglican Establishment in an ambiguous position and made its classification difficult both for those within as well as those without its bounds.

Broadly speaking, most outsiders then (as indeed most outsiders now) would qualify the Anglican Church as Protestant, and in so doing coincide with the opinion of some of its members. Others, upholding its catholicity, lay stress upon the unbroken continuity of religious tradition on the Islands from the time of the earliest Christian missions there established. Though it was reformed in the sixteenth century, they maintain, the continuity of its organic life was never interrupted, and therefore, historically as well as legally, it is the same Church as that established before the Reformation. (81)

However, granting the validity of the claim that by retaining the fundamental faith and ecclesiastical organization almost, if not quite, intact, the Church of England remained a part of the Catholic and Apostolic one, it is not easy to see why it should be considered

---

81. Hunt, Rev. William: "Church of England". Enc. Brit.

universal since in its functioning it was closely bound to and co-extensive with one particular state. In the Anglican Church for at least two hundred years missionary zeal was lacking. There was no effort made to proselitise abroad, and even the most staunchly Anglican colonists of England, merely by crossing the seas were lost to episcopal care and guidance from the mother country.

Of course, to the puritan group the absence of ecclesiastical supervision was a blessing, for while they could remain nominally within the national church, once overseas they were free to do much as they pleased in religious observances. This was one of the primary causes for the wholesale exodus of the seventeenth century.

Today, it is still difficult to define the Anglican Church exactly, for in the course of its history, as Mr. Walter Alison Phillips, an authority on ecclesiastical matters, asserts in a Britannica article, there was to develop "a most startling diversity of doctrine and ritual practice varying from what closely resembles that or Rome, to that of the broadest Liberalism and the extremest Evangelical Protestantism". This state or affairs, to outsiders may look like ecclesiastical anarchy, he thinks, yet it today is precisely "the characteristic note of the Church or England; it may

be and has been defended as consonant with Christian charity and suited to the genius of a people not remarkable for theological consistency; but it makes it all the more difficult to say what the religion of Englishmen actually is, even within the English Church". (82)

---

82. Phillips, Walter Alison; "Religion in England", Enc. Brit., XI edition.

EDWARD VI

Under Edward, or to be more precise, under the rule of Protector Somerset, the tempo of religious reform took a remarkable speed in the direction of Protestantism, the Anglican liturgy being modified by the publication of the Books of Common Prayer as the Anglican creed was, by the Forty-two Articles of Religion.

Doubtless the chief hand in the composition of the Edwardian Prayer Books was Thomas Cranmer's. Parliament authorised the first in the Act of Uniformity of 1549 which states 'the Archbishop of Canterbury... and other learned men' had been appointed to 'draw one convenient and meet order, rite and fashion of common and open prayer and administration of the sacraments to be had and used in his Majesty's realm of England and Wales.'

For its devising, the author (or authors) drew from a number of sources such as the Eastern liturgies, the Latin breviary of Cardinal Quiñones, the Mozarabic missal as well as Lutheran , Genevan and other prayer books, the continental influences being readily perceptible in the litany and in the sacraments. With simplification as keynote, the advantages were to be two-fold: firstly, by substituting English for Latin the

service would become intelligible to all, for Latin the people 'understoode not, so that they haue heard with theyr eares only; and theyr hartes, spirite and mind haue not been edified thereby'; secondly, by reducing the large number of liturgical books required in Roman Catholic times to one, simplicity would be ensured and variety of use eliminated as well, since heretofore there had been a great diversity in the saying and singing of Mass within the kingdom, some celebrants following the separate uses of Hereford, York, Bangor or Lincoln.

A juxtaposition of the two Prayer Books brings out clearly their fundamental differences - the relatively conservative tone of the one and the marked Protestantism of the other- for it was not Cranmer's intention to make an entirely new form of worship. He insisted it was the same service used by the Church of England for fifteen hundred years and that surely 'it was well to use the old when the old might be well used' as no one could reasonably reject the old form without 'bewraying theyr owne folye'; they ought to reverence the old traditions for their antiquity rather than desire 'innouations and newfanglenesse'.

By Whitsunday the ninth of June 1549 the first

Prayer Book came into general compulsory use, and throughout the kingdom the new dispensation was received if not enthusiastically at least quietly. But in the West there arose a protest so violent it led to open rebellion - a rebellion in the end quelled by force of arms. For if, as the Preface stated, Saint Paul's example was to be followed by the use of language all folk could understand, there were some of the King's subjects with a legitimate cause for grievance. The Welsh, whose vernacular was, after all, not English, for they still spoke their ancient Celtic tongue, demanded in no uncertain terms a return to the Mass in Latin, Communion in one kind, and the restoration of the old ceremonies and images. The singular beauty and majesty or the new liturgy, deservedly called "one of the most beautiful things in European literature" (83) was lost upon the people of Wales and Cornwall who likened it to a 'Christmas game' in English. So to the discontented went a royal message of reassurance: 'It seemeth to you a new service and indeed it is none other but the old: the selfsame words in English which were in Latin, saving a few things left out'. (84)

This was an understatement. Most people could, for its chameleon-like quality, accept the Prayer

---

83. Belloc, op. cit. p. 159
84. Foxe, v 732, quot. Gibson, op. cit.

Book without greatly overstraining their consciences; nothing in it was openly inconsistent with the old faith for at crucial points the wording was ambiguous. All in all, it was a compromise, a deft blending of the old and the new which revealed Cranmer's authorship in the harmonious prose and in the passages left intentionally obscure, and his cautious and hesitant nature in the desire to appeal to all sections of the population without antagonizing any. He was no ruthless destroyer who would raze the ancient edifice to its very foundations in order to build entirely anew; he was inclined rather to preserve a bit of tracery here or a pilaster there for their beauty's sake or because they were time hallowed. And in fashioning his life's masterpiece he fashioned as well a theological system so complex and subtle that it still furnishes matter for learned disagreement.

For all, learned or unlearned, the most noticeable change other than the shift to English must have been the manner of administration of the Eucharist. Now it was to be given, as in early Christian times, in both kinds. The communicants, ranging themselves, the men on the one side and the women on the other, were to remain in the choir when all else save the ministers and the clerks had left, and in the same position in which they had made a general confession - kneeling

humby upon their knees -they were to receive the sacrament, the bread being placed in a paten ' or in some comely thing' and the wine in a chalice 'or in some fayre and conuenient cup', to which should be added a little pure and clean water.

Then, upon delivering the holy bread, the priest was to say:

> The body of our Lorde Jesus Christo which was giuen for thee preserue thy body and soule unto euerlasting lyfe.

And, on delivering the wine, which the communicant was given to drink once and no more:

> The bloud of our Lorde Jesus Christe which was shed for thee, preserue thy body and soule unto euerlastynge lyfe. (85)

Things were to continue more or less as before although there was an explanatory rubric for the objectors. Certainly, in the past, communicants were wont to receive the holy bread from the priest's hand into their own- and Christ had not commanded otherwise. But, in order to establish uniformity of practice, it was thought advisable for the priest to give the sacrament to the faithful in their mouths instead of placing it in their hands. This was done also lest anyone should secretly bear the bread away with them and keep it , using it either for superstitious or wicked purposes.

---

85. First Prayer Book of Edward VI, pp. 225-226.

To avoid matters and occasion of dissension, another rubric stated, the bread prepared for the communion should be made in one fashion alone, unleavened and round as customary before, but larger and thicker so it could be divided into two or more pieces, at the discretion of the minister, and so distributed. Men must not think, however, 'less to be receyved in parte than in the whole, but in eache of them the whole body of our saulour Jesus Christ'. (86)

And one more rubric, referring to the traditional gestures of devotion at prayer such as making the sign of the cross or striking the breast, said that, without blame, these motions might be continued or left, according to every man's devotion. (87)

The first issue of the Book of Common Prayer lacked an Ordinal, an omission supplied in the year following when Parliament empowered a committee to prepare one, to be set forth under the great seal of England before the first of April 1550. This, the "Forme and manner of making and consecrating ... Bishops, Priests and Deacons" shows that instead of the eight orders of the medieval church there were to be but three - a division subsisting to this day in the Anglican Church - and that much of the ceremonial

---

86. First Prayer Book of Edward VI, p. 230
87. Ibid. p. 289.

before customary in ordination was left out.

All, from deacons upwards, were required to be learned in Latin, though they should reserve this tongue for private study and for private orisons, never for reading or singing in church to the congregation: 'when menne saye Matins and Euensong priuately they maie saie the same in any language they themselues do understande'. (88) * And to all the clergy the Oath or the King's Supremacy must be tendered. By this the authority, power, and jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome was utterly renounced, relinquished and forsaken. Everyone must swear an oath as lengthy as it was explicit, couched in stiff, legal-sounding language strikingly different from the rest of the text:

> ... I shall neuer consent nor agree, that the Bysshop of Rome shall practice, exercise, or haue, anye maner of authoritie, Jurisdiccion, or power withyn thys Realme, or anye other the Kynges dominions, but shall resyste the same at all tymes, to the uttermoste of my power. And I from hencefoorth will accepte, repute, and take the Kynges Maiestie to be the onely Supreme head in earth, of the Churche of England: And to my connynge, witte, and uttermoste of my power, withoute guyle, fraude, or other undue meane, I will obserue, kepe, maytayne, and defende, the whole effectes and contentes of all and synguler actes and Statutes made, and to be made within this Realme, in derogacion, extirpation, and extinguishment of the Bishop of Rome, and his auctoritie, and all other Actes and Statutes, made or to be made, in confirmacion and corroboracion of

---

88. Second Prayer Book of Edward VI, pp. 445-46.
* The inconsistencies in spelling appear in the original text.

> the Kynges power, of the supreme head in yearth, of the Churche of England: and this I will dow agaynste all maner of persones, of what estate, dygnitie, or degree, or condicion they be, and in no wise doe nor attempte, nor to my power suffre to be doone or attempted, directly or indirectlye, any thing or thynges, prieuely or apperlye, to the lette, hinderaunce, dammage, or derogacion thereof, or any part thereof, by anye maner of meanes, of for anye maner of pretence. And in case any othe bee made, or hath been made, by me, to any person or persones, in maintenance, defence, or fauoure, of the Bishoppe of Rome, or his authoritie, iurisdiccion, or power, I repute the same as vayne and adnichilate, so helpe me God, through Jesus Christ. (89)

Apart from this nationalistic broadside, intended to forestall papal intromision in its affairs, the attitude of the Anglican Church was one broadly tolerant of religious ceremonial practices elsewhere. If they respected the firm line of demarcation separating England from the rest of Christendom, foreigners might do much as they liked in their own countries, without being guilty of error or superstition. 'For we thinke it conueniente that euery countrye should use such ceremonies, as thei shal thynke best to the settyng foorth of Goddes honor and glorye: and to the reducyng of the people to a most perfect and Godly liuing... and that they shoulde putte away other thynges, which from tyme to tyme they perceiue to be most abused, as in mennes ordinaunced it often chaunceth diuersely in diuerse countryes'. (90)

Besides the Oath or the King's Supremacy there

---

89. First Prayer Book, p.300 (Second Prayer Book, p. 446)
90. First Prayer Book, p. 288.

was, for those to be consecrated bishops, a much briefer oath of reverence and obedience, professed to the Archbishop and to the 'Metropoliticall church'.

The tendency to simplify is especially noticeable in the vestments prescribed. In the choir office, the surplice only was permissible, and at holy communion, the officiating priest should wear ' a white albe plain with a vestment or cope', while the assisting clergy should have on 'albes with tunicles'. If a bishop were celebrant, he was to wear, besides his rochette, a surplice or alb and a cope or vestment and to carry his pastoral staff in his hand, or else have it borne by his chaplain.

Thus the vestiarian controversy, later to take on so great importance was born. However, while the traditional canonicals were being done away with, paradoxically enough, it was recommended as more seemly, for university graduates to wear their academic regalia at religious functions:

> In the saying or singing of Matens and Euensong, Baptysing and Burying, the minister, in paryshe churches and chapels annexed to the same shall use a Surples. And in all Cathedral churches, and Colledges, archdeacons, Deanes, Prouestes, Maisters, Prebendaryes, and fellowes, being Graduates, may use in the quiere, beside theyr

> Surplesses, such hoodes as pertaineth to their seueral degrees, which they haue taken in any uniuersitie within this realme...(91)

Cranmer's misgivings as to how religionists at both extremes would accept the new Anglican ritual were to prove justified. So diverse were the minds of men, he had written, that some for conscience's sake 'would not wish to depart from a peece of the leaste of theyr ceremonies (they bee so adicted to their old customs)' while those on the other side 'bee so newfangle that they would innouate all thyng, and so doe despyse the olde that nothing can lyke them, but that is newe.' (92) Certainly the first Book of Common Prayer proved disquieting for the strict Catholics, and it left the Protestants far from satisfied. Bishop Hooper openly criticised the book as 'very defective and of doubtful construction, and, in some respects, indeed, manirestly impious'. (93) Nor did it meet with the approval of the foreign Protestant theologians then living in England, leaders of congregations there established, such as Bucer, Dryander and Peter Martyr, who voiced their objections loudly. Even Calvin himself from his stronghold in Switzerland, took part in the matter by urging King and Archbishop to do away with

---

91. First Prayer Book of Edward VI, p. 266.
92. First Prayer Book of Edward VI, p. 267.
93. Bishop Gibson, Introd. to op. cit. quot.

all relics of Popery.

The second and more radical phase of the Edwardian reform began with three parliamentary acts of 1549-50, one of which ordained the destruction of all the remaining religious statues and paintings and the suppression of religious books 'called antiphoners, missals, scrayles, processionals, manuals, legends, pyes, pertuysses, primers in Latin and in English, cowchers, journals...' (94) in a word, all the old books of piety. Thus a copious stream or English prose, and one of the richest of legacies from the middle ages, was lost to posterity.

The culminating point in the reform movement came two years afterwards when, with the acceptance of the Forty-two articles of Religion, the Anglican Church was given its first creed, a work in style and form almost entirely Cranmer's. Then, too, the Second Act of Uniformity introduced as a schedule a new form of the Prayer Book intended to explain the first and make it more fully perfect. This revised edition marks the furthest limit to liturgical changes in the direction of Protestantism ever reached in England.

Little is known of the circumstances of its preparation. Cranmer, a man of frequent moral hesitations,

---

94. Bindoff, Tudor England, quot. p. 161.

found himself at a crossroad: he had abandoned many of his Lutheran beliefs and, subject to a constant barrage of arguments from the most violent of reformers, had come under their sway. Perhaps John a Lasco, the Polish divine, exercised the last decisive influence, for he was much with the Archbishop at the time. The book was not brought up before Convocation for revision,(95) but at any rate, it did receive official sanction and on the first of November 1552 came into use. Again the most important modifications had to do with the Eucharist; and those conservative persons who had been able to give the ceremony some sort of Catholic interpretation, could do so no longer. Now, for the priest endowed by divine grace to offer a sacrifice was substituted the minister chosen to conduct an office of worship purely commemorative. It was the moment of transformation of the Mass into the Communion Service.

Some of the most significant alterations made were: the omission of the epiklesis, or invocation to the Holy Ghost upon the elements. Also omitted were the mixed chalice, the use of the sign or the cross in the consecration prayer, the Agnus Dei and the post-communion anthems. All references to the altar were removed, as the altar itself had been removed from every church in the capital city during the week of Whitsun 1550, illegally, through the

---

95. Quot. Bishop Gibson, op. cit.

initiative of Ridley, Bishop or London. Instead a table had been placed in the body of the church or in the chancel.

Standing at the north side of this board, covered with 'a fayre white lynnen clothe', the minister, after receiving communion in both kinds himself, was to deliver it to any other ministers present and after, to the people 'in theyr hands, kneling'. The words of consecration, merely commemorative, were, on delivering the bread:

> Take and eate this, in remembraunce that Christ dyed for thee, and feede on him in thy hearte by faythe, with thanksgiuing.

And on delivering the cup:

> Drinke this in remembraunce that Christ's bloude was shed for thee, and be thankfull.

Genuflexion, despite all other concession to Protestant views, proved still objectionable as idolatrous. But on this point Cranmer stood firm, although he did append the lengthy explanatory note, famous as the Black Rubric, hoping to pacify the unquiet spirits and trouble-makers. This states:

> Although no ordre can be so perfectlye deuised, but it may be of some, eyther for theyr ignoraunce and infirmitie, or els of malice and obstinacie, misconstrued, depraued, and interpreted in a wrong part: And yet, because brotherly charitie willeth, that so much as conueniently may be, offences shoulde be taken awaye: therefore we willing to doe the same. Whereas it is ordeyned

> in the booke of common prayer, in the administration or the Lord's Supper, that the Communicants kneelyng shoulde receyue the holye Communion: whiche thynge beynge well mente, for a sygnificacion of the humble and grateful acknowledgyng of the benefites of Chryst, geuen unto the woorthye receyuer, and to auoyde the prophanacion and dysordre, which about the holy Communion myght els ensue: Lest yet the same kneelyng myght be thought or taken otherwyse, we dooe declare that it is not ment thereby, that any adoracion is doone, or oughte to bee doone, eyther unto the Sacramentall bread or wyne there bodily receyued, or unto anye reall and essencial presence there beeyng of Christ's naturall fleshe and bloude. For as concernynge the Sacramentall bread and wyne, they remayne styll in theyr verye naturall substances, and therefore may not be adored, for that were Idolatrye to be abhorred of all faythful christians. And as concernynge the natural body and blood of our sauiour Christ, they are in neauen and not here. For it is ageynst the trueth of Christes true natural bodye, to be in moe places than in one, at one tyme. (96)

The round, unleavened bread, reminiscent of the host of Catholic times, prescribed by the first Prayer Book was discarded, and in its place for communion 'to take away the superstition whiche any person hathe or myghte haue...' the bread should be of the sort used at meals, but the best and purest kind of wheat bread obtainable. And if any of it were left over from the ceremony, the curate should have it for his own use.

In vestments, a greater simplicity than ever before was called for: bishops were required to wear a rochet only and other clerics, a surplice at all services. And for the ecclesiastical garments used in the old

---

96. II Prayer Book of Edward VI, pp. 392-3.

ritual , now superfluous, a practical use was found. In April and May of 1553, royal commissioners travelled through the country taking stock of all'copes and vestments of cloth of gold, cloth of tissue and cloth of silver in the churches'. Anything else of intrinsic worth was listed as well: crosses, candlesticks, chalices, censers... In May, every church was allotted cloths for the communion board and one chalice; all other things were sold at once by the Crown for cash. (97)

The Second Book was destined to be in use but a few months' space, for on the death of King Edward his Acts of Uniformity were repealed and the pendulum swung sharply back to the old religion, the kingdom, in Queen Mary's reign, being formally reconciled to Rome.

---

97. Prescott, H.M.F., Mary Tudor, p. 168

MARY TUDOR

The reign of Mary Tudor may be accounted one aspect of the Counter-Reformation because of the effort on her part to return England to the Roman fold. This she succeeded in effecting for a brief space only, and in the attempt attracted to her person the bitter animosity of her own people such as few English monarchs have ever drawn. 'Bloody Mary' she remains in popular memory - an epithet given her in Foxe's greatly moving chronicle of the Protestant martyrs, the Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum commentarii, written in 1559 and translated four years afterwards as Acts and Monuments . It was familiarly called the Book of Martyrs and, given a place beside that of Common Prayer in churches and in homes, came to exert an influence extensive and far lasting.

Bloody Mary she remains in the opinion of writers of historical text-books to this day, as for instance, that of the Reverend James White, who, playing on a well worn groove of her record affirms the Queen "thought cruelty a merit, and the destruction of liberty the highest duty of kings... and was such a conscientious believer in the Romish faith that she tried to exterminate with fire and faggots all who ventured to express

different opinion". (98) Bloody Mary she is called by historians of the first water such as David Hume who considers her incapable of generosity or clemency, and determined to remove every person from whom the least danger could be apprehended. (99)

More dispassionate modern writers concede the Queen to have been by nature neither cruel nor sanguinary. Quite the contrary, it would seem, is true. She was"not wicked" (100) Her conduct, in every respect, was conciliatory and pacific; having no personal vindictiveness, with those who plotted against her life and her queenship she proved herself "the most merciful of her line".(101) And once on the throne, rightfully hers, she did not proceed to punish those who had connived to deprive her of it, nor to destroy with fire or axe those whose religious convictions differed from her own. With lenity more than once on the verge of being foolhardy, she would have spared those implicated in Northumberland's plot against her - until Wyatt's rebellion made generosity impossible: the most guiltless of those to suffer death for treason, the ill-starred Lady Jane Grey, with her last words on

---

98. White, Rev. James, History of England, pp. 463-464.
99. Hume, David, "Execution of Lady Jane Grey".
100. Trevelyan, op. cit. p. 319.
101. Bindoff, op. cit., p. 178.

the scaffold, recognised the sentence about to be executed upon her as lawful. In all likelihood, had Mary's own life ended at this point she would be remembered as a compassionate princess, notwithstanding the political executions permitted on her part as a measure of safety, reluctantly and without rancour.

Of course, what her most glaring later mistakes were, any one today - with the aid of hindsight - can easily point out: her Spanish marriage which turned out to be unfruitful, involved England in a disastrous foreign war, and in the end lost the nation Calais; and her attempt to restore Roman Catholicism which ultimately served to foster the Reformed religion.

Mary made a sincere avowal of her intentions with regard to religion when she officially declared on the 13th of August 1553 she would not 'compel or constrain consciences' and sounded a strange new note of tolerance - one of the first ever to be heard in any modern state. Ingenuously she hoped by argument to convince and thus convert the dissenters: Catholic clerics and Protestant divines met at her suggestion in a public debate to discuss dogmatic differences, only to prove themselves truly irreconciliable. The meeting ended in a dispute so violent it was decided to suspend all further polemics on dogma outside the universities until Parliament should convene.

The Queen was determined to rule in a perfectly legal manner with full legislative support; and when the first Marian parliament met on the 5th of October 1553, Commons was not packed, there were among its members scores of Protestants. Nevertheless, within one session all the Edwardian religious reforms were swept away as well as some of the Henrician. Then besides, 'the Queen's most noble person' was declared once more legitimate. What one parliament had taken away another parliament could restore - that legislative body having been endowed in Henry VIII's time with a competence in matters spiritual and temporal it would henceforth retain. But, to Mary's intense pride of lineage, to be legitimised by virtue of mere parliamentary action must have been offensive, and religion aside (if one can detach Mary from religion) it must have been one reason more for her to yearn for the return of Papal dominion - for then only would the stigma attached to her birth be fully erased.

Further, the Queen had to retain, however unwillingly, the title of Supreme Head of the Church of England. If her dearest wish was to be a Defender of the Faith, as a sincere papalist, she would have foregone that headship gladly. But, unable to dispense with that prerogative - a jewel now as firmly imbedded in the royal

crown as that of Fidei Defensor, she took advantage of the authority vested in her to remove from office some Protestant clerics installed by Edward, and to reinstate into the ecclesiastical hierarchy those who had been imprisoned for their recusancy: Gardiner was taken from the Tower and again placed on the See of Winchester; Bonner again became Bishop of London, and both were kept as close advisers to the Crown.

Finally, before the close of the first Marian session, Commons petitioned the Queen, for it lacked constitutional power to prevent her, not to marry a foreigner. The Spanish marriage, from the first, was unpopular. Even staunchly Catholic Englishmen, such as Reginald Pole, later Cardinal of England, (102) looked askance at an alliance that would place their country under the sway of the most powerful monarch in Christendom.

As a private person, Mary would doubtless have preferred to remain celibate. She had never minded, she avowed, being unmarried; indeed, she would much rather have ended her days chastely. But as Queen regnant she was placed on the horns of a dilemma: she might take as consort an alien prince, or else marry

---

102. Durant, Will, The Renaissance, p. 592.

one of her noble subjects. One decision might embroil the nation in a foreign war, the other might cause internal strife. So she turned for advice, as often before, to her kinsman, the Emperor Charles V, and much correspondence crossed and re-crossed the seas. For three months she did not commit herself, and at her court there was much feverish activity among the foreign ambassadors, desirous of pressing the interests of rival candidates.

At last, as some had foreseen and feared, she elected Philip - a choice from her point of view not unreasonable - for, even if the English suitors had been more prepossessing than they were, they could not have given her the support she deemed necessary for the re-establishment of Roman Catholicism in Britain, the mainspring of her actions throughout her last years. Quite naturally she chose as consort the scion of the house of Hapsburg whose arms she already bore on her own scutcheon.

When the news of Northumberland's conspiracy to deprive Mary of her rights reached the Netherlands, Charles V viewed the situation with alarm. He was then in greatly impaired health and spirits, but on being apprised of the state of affairs, roused himself to immediate action and named three special envoys to the English court and enjoined them to act, not to remain

passive spectators. The ambassadors arrived in London on the twenty-third of June, the day of Edward's death, therefore they had little occasion to exert any influence, for things moved rapidly on their own momentum. The two week's enthronement of the gentle and unfortunate Lady Jane Grey ended on the block, and Mary, amid general rejoicing, was proclaimed legitimate Queen of England.

Just one day after he knew the rebellion quelled, Charles wrote his son to ask if he would be prepared to marry the new English Queen, and , although not too enthusiastic at the prospect, Philip, a dutiful son, sent an answer which was received in Brussels on the 11th of September:

> Lo único que tengo que decir sobre el asunto inglés es que me alegra saber que mi tía ha subido al trono de ese reino, congratulándome por las ventajas mencionadas por su Majestad en lo que respecta a Francia y a los Países Bajos... Es seguro que si ella (Mary) sugiriese un matrimonio entre ella y su Majestad, y su Majestad estuviese dispuesto, la cosa sería inmejorable. Pero dado a lo que su Majestad piensa en el asunto, y en caso de querer arreglar un matrimonio para mí, ya sabe que soy hijo tan obediente que no tengo más voluntad que la suya... (103)
>
> (August 22, 1553)

To the Emperor's mind, already dwelling on the peace of Yuste, matrimony for himself was out of the question, nonetheless, for its advantages, he pressed it on Philip.

---

103. Merriman, Roger, Bigelow- Carlos V, quot. p. 267 (C.C.P. Spanish, XI p. CXXXVII)

In time, both Queen and Emperor, for different reasons, were to be as eager for the match. Charles knew how important it was to place England within the Hapsburg sphere of influence; if, at the same time Catholicism were advanced, that would be a secondary, if worthy, consideration. He was unwilling to jeopardise his position by religious complications: counterreform should not be pushed too far nor move too swiftly. The Mass, with full Catholic ritual, might be resumed at once in the Queen's private chapel, he advised, but for the kingdom at large a return to things as they had been at the end of Henry VIII's reign should, for the time being, suffice. With Mary, on the other hand, religious considerations came first and foremost. She hoped to turn back the tide of heresy, to bring about a full reconciliation with Rome and ultimately, to restore all the old beliefs and ceremonies.

"The terms of the royal marriage', Professor Trevelyan says, "were most injurious to England". (104) And so they were to prove, although when the contract was drawn up they appeared, on paper at least, favourable enough to allay the fears of patriotic Englishmen. The highlights of the document were: Philip was to be merely prince consort, not king; all the privileges and rights

---

104. Trevelyan, History of England, p. 320.

of all classes were to be maintained; neither the English navy nor its cannon, nor funds from the English treasury were to be used to wage foreign wars; should the Queen die childless, the contract would automatically end, but should she leave an heir of her body, he was to inherit the Low Countries and the Franche Comté as well as England - the rest of the imperial dominions were to pass to don Carlos, Philip's son by the earlier marriage; should don Carlos die without issue, the heir of Philip and Mary was to have the whole empire of Spain. In fact, there were strong objections heard in Spain against the project, for many felt it was tantamount to disinheriting the Infante. (105)

In England too, feeling ran high against the proposed marriage, for patriotic reasons mainly: was the country to be only a little skiff trailing in the wake of the proud Spanish galleon? Mary herself interpreted the unrest as an attack upon her faith - the matter of the marriage, to use the Queen's own metaphor, seemed to her 'but a Spanish cloak to cover their pretended purpose against our religion'. (106)

On the 6th. of March 1554, a marriage by proxy took place, and the reluctent groom proceeded at a leisurely pace to England and Winchester cathedral where with

---

105. Merriman, Op. cit. p. 272.
106. Prescott, H.F.M., Mary Tudor, quot. p. 247.

solemnities, the ecclesiastical ceremony was celebrated. As a surprise wedding present Charles gave his son the kingship of Naples and of Jerusalem so he could, in his own right, bear the title of king, for ostensibly he was to play the role of a prince consort.

Upon his arrival Philip did his unsuccessful best to dispel the aura of unpopularity hanging about his person and his retinue: he distributed fifty thousand ducats brought with him as largesse, as well as other valuable gifts of jewelry to prominent courtiers; and he recommended to his small entourage of less than a dozen persons, that they try to adapt themselves entirely to English life and English customs.

Certainly, the return to Rome and the Spanish marriage were both challenges to English national pride, but another reason for disquiet was the fate of the abbey lands. Were these to be returned? Everyone wondered.

Lords and Commons, at last, on the condition sine qua non that the rights of the new owners of church properties were to be safeguarded, acceded to the Queen's wishes of returning the Church of England to Roman jurisdiction. Before Cardinal Pole as Papal Legate, the members of Parliament, on their knees, showed themselves humble, 'very sorry and repentent of the schism and disobedience committed in (the) realm'. (107) Thus the

---

107. Prescott, H.M.F., op. cit. p. 295 quot. (Ven. Cal. v, 966, Pole- Julius III, November 30th 1554.)

country once more was reconciled to Roman Catholicism. It is significant that the selfsame act derogating all the statutes, articles and clauses against the apostolic See of Rome, from the twentieth year of Henry's reign, should also consolidate the spiritual and ecclesiastical possessions and the hereditary rights transferred to the secular state. Then the heresy laws abrogated by Protector Somerset for the furtherance of Protestantism were automatically revived and there was no legal hindrance to the dreadful persecution which was to follow.

By and large, the prevailing religious sentiment in England then was Roman Catholic, of a lukewarm sort, for the fervently pious were few. But also there was , as a residue from the Edwardian reign, a small Protestant minority, in their own way as sincere and zealous -or as bigoted and intransigent- as the Queen herself. It stood to reason that this hard core of resistance, represented by the more recalcitrant Protestants both foreing and English, should be removed if possible as dangerous or potentially dangerous to the government's policy or even to the Queen's person. And for the problem a rather beningn solution was found - that of exile. The disaffected were allowed to leave the country. In some cases , when persuasion failed, they were coerced to go.(108)

---

108. Prescott, H.F.M. op. cit, p. 201

They did not flee in terror or in haste. They were given ample time to arrange their affairs, and entire congregations migrated to the continent under the guidance of their pastors. Many of those who availed themselves of the opportunity travelled to Protestant havens in Germany or in Switzerland; some sought protection in France, where as a political measure, they were accepted and allowed to plot against their Queen. In a propitious environment, the expatriates soon abandoned the Prayer Book as much too conservative, in favour of Calvin's Institutio, and in the safety of their new homes they set themselves to plan the downfall of the Marian régime while awaiting - in not too great discomfort - the day of their return. These are known as the Marian exiles.

A number of fervent Protestants belonging to different sects did not join the orderly exodus either because they lacked means - for they were lesser folk socially and financially - or because they chose to remain and uphold in their homeland their religious convictions. Soon, how strong a devotion some of them felt was to be evidenced at Smithfield where with unflinching valour they met death. These were the Marian Martyrs.

A recent study of the social, economic and regional composition of Marian Exiles and Marian Martyrs reveals some remarkable contrasts. For the former were exclusively men and women of the wealthy or noble classes,

while the latter were, with a few clerical exceptions, plain people, petty craftsmen or labourers, tinkers, weavers or shoemakers. About one hundred clergymen suffered death - a few of them of gentle birth - and sixty of the lay victims were women. More than two thirds of the entire number came from London and the six home counties. In the staunchly Roman Catholic North only one person was burnt, and one other in the far Western region of England. This is easily explainable, for in the urban and industrial centres of the South-East, Protestantism had become deeply rooted in many hearts. (109)

At a distance, from places of safety abroad, the Exiles directed and encouraged the campaign against Mary by publishing tracts, anti-Catholic or merely seditious. There is no record of any one of the expatriates having attempted to return home to face the persecutors. This does not necessarily mean that, had any one of them been called upon to sacrifice his life in a fiery confirmation of his faith, he would have faltered, only that not one of the emigrés was on hand to do so.

In England the Protestant irreconcilables were far from idle. Some, if not all, of the many acts, overt, annoying and anonymous, against the Queen's religion and

---

109. Bindoff, op. cit., p. 176.

the Queen's peace may be traced to them. These incidents, as a few historians give them, range from trivial ones to others of more serious import. As for example: (a) a dead cat, dressed in the canonicals of a priest at Mass, with crosses front and back, its crown tonsured, and a piece of paper - as if it were a canticle - placed between its front paws, which were tied together, appeared on the post of the gallows at Cheapside, Saint Matthew's parish; (b) the American historian Prescott mentions a dead dog with a similarly tonsured head and a rope about its neck as having been thrown through a window into the Queen's chambers; (c) caricatures in rude chalk, offensive either to royalty or to religion were drawn on walls; (d) children pelted the Spanish Ambassador's harbingers with snow-covered stones as they passed through the London streets; (e) a game of 'English and Spaniards' was invented, in which there was a pretence of hanging the boy playing the part of the Spanish Prince; (f) some, among the populace watching the entrance of Prince Philip and his bride into London jeered at him for wearing the 'idolatrous' cross of Santiago on his breast... Things such as these were no more than straws in the wind.

(a) Stone, Jean Mary: Mary the First, Queen of England, p. 280.
(b) Prescott, William, Mary Tudor, p. 206.
(c) White, Rev. James, History of England, p.
(d) Tappan, Dr. E.M., England's Story, p.186.
(e) Ibid., p. 186.
(f) Merriman, R.B., Carlos V, p. 272.

But also, (g) "the lives of the preaching friars were in danger", (from whom, the annalist does not state), and a pistol shot was fired at a priest celebrating Mass at Westminster: (h) in Kent, another priest had his nose cut off; (i) a church full of worshippers was set on fire in Suffolk; (j) the Protestant emigrés were sending home pamphlets to be distributed, calling the Queen 'a reactionary fool' and speaking of the 'lousy Latin service' of an 'idolatrous Mass'; (k) some leaflets called upon their readers to rise in revolt and depose Mary; (l) and at a meeting of 17,000 persons (the number seems exaggerated) at Aldgate on the 14th. of March 1554, there was a call to remove Mary and place Elizabeth on the throne; (m) cannon balls from a salvo of welcome when Philip reached England were seen aimed to fall too near the royal barge; (n) when Bishop Bourne, a Romanist, preached at St. Paul's there was a commotion and 'hurliburli', and a dagger was thrown at him, which hit the pulpit and rebounded; (o) in the London Cathedral (St. Paul's) a priest was "all but murdered on the altar steps, and the Host splashed with his blood";

(g) White, Rev. James, History of England, p. 466.
(h) Prescott, W., Mary Tudor, p. 302.
(i) Irwin, Margaret, Elizabeth and the Prince of Spain, p. 116.
(j) Prescott, William, op. cit., p. 304.
(k) Pastor, XIV, Quot. Durant, op. cit. p. 596.
(l) Froude, J. , Mary Tudor, p. 119.
(m) Merriman, op. cit., p. 272
(n) Prescott, H.F.M., Mary Tudor, p. 196.
(o) Irwin, op. cit., p. 116.

(p) several Scottish divines were openly preaching against 'the Antichrist come to life' and against 'the return of Popery in the land'.

To preserve unity and to quell such rebellious outbreaks, restraint was altogether necessary, yet Mary and her Council had the choice of punishing either for treason or for heresy. The Emperor Charles, sensing danger, warned against persecuting the rebels as heretics, they should, he said, be repressed as treasonable. The Marian Council, however, resentful of Spanish interference, turned deaf ears to the wise advice, the Queen was at least permissive, and as a result, some three hundred Protestants were sent to the stake for refusing to give up their beliefs.

Although the Spaniards have often been blamed for fomenting the persecution, actually, for their own ends, they strove for moderation. At the height of the terror, when smoke from the Smithfield pyres was darkening the English sky, Philip spoke against the holocaust, and his chaplain, a Franciscan friar, preached a sermon denouncing the judgments against the heretics, before the assembled court.

The outcome of the Marian persecution proved exactly the reverse of what had been intended. Instead of eradicating heresy, it fostered and strengthened it.

(p) Prescott, H.F.M., op. cit., p. 196.

Seen in retrospect, the reason for this was due in part to the unexpected and brave resistance of the Protestants, and in part also to the unexpected reaction of the public at large to their deaths. The moment was one of transition. Before, in an age of faith, heresy had been regarded as witchcraft was, not merely as an error, but as an uforgivable sin meriting the worst punishment human ingenuity could devise. This age, weak in faith, save for small antagonistic sectors at either extreme, had seen violent oscillations in religion and most people had become inured to changes and had learnt to trim their sails to the charging wind.

Today the general run of serious historical opinion agrees in calling the Marian persecution ill advised, to say the least, and many are the judgments that in four hundred years have been passed by historians of great or lesser note, by writers of Catholic or of Protestant bias, for it has been hard to view with a dispassionate gaze this dark page in English history.

It has been given as an attenuating circumstance that, when they placed the lives of their fellow Englishmen at the mercy of the ecclesiastical courts, Parliament could not have imagined the loss of lives would be so great. (110) The same argument , however, holds true

---

110. Trevelyan, History of England, p. 322.

for the ecclesiastical judges or for Queen and Council - at the beginning. Simply because, in all English history, there had been nothing to approach it, numerically speaking. In the hundred and fifty years before Mary ascended the throne, about one hundred Lollards had been sent to the stake for heresy. And the toll of lives taken by the Reformation both of Catholic and Protestant dissenters amounts to sixty persons only. In 1506, for instance, of forty-five men charged with heresy all had recanted save two. Now, fifty years afterwards, recantations were expected but recantations were few.

Under Elizabeth, the death roll shows a total of two hundred, corresponding, in her long reign, to about eight persons a year, which, if placed beside Mary's record of almost ninety, compares favourably. All those arraigned in Elizabeth's reign were convicted and condemned for treason, never religion, whether or not they were loyal Englishmen like Penry and Greenwood and others. As the axe was a privilege granted only to the nobility, all commoners suffered the traditional penalty for the crime of treason by being hung, drawn and quartered, a punishment more gruesome and only slightly less appalling than burning.

Tied upon a wooden hurdle, the convicted prisoner would be dragged through the streets to Tyburn, the place of execution, there hanged, let down alive, castrated,

disembowelled (the entrails being burnt in the prisoner's sight), then decapitation followed and finally, the body was divided in four parts to be disposed of at the Queen's pleasure. (111) Such was the law, although the hangmen were not always adroit enough to carry it out to the letter and perform their prescribed work while life and consciousness still lingered.

Then too, unless the prisoner willingly confessed, as a preamble to death, torture, repudiated by the English common law and associated in the popular mind with the tribunal of the Inquisition, would be applied. Never was torture more frequently resorted to than at this particular time. (112) A few twists of the pulley or a few turns of the screw generally sufficed to wring from any prisoner a confession of his own or another's guilt, for as Shakespeare's Portia once observed, '... upon the rack... men enforcéd do speak anything'. Oftentimes the mere sight of the dreadful instruments or a threat of their use would be enough to elicit any information.

Against the Marian persecutors the charge of unfair accusation is not adduced, for the testimony to condemn the martyrs was their own, freely given. Doubtless they were heretics and as heretics they were accused and

---

111. Waugh, Evelyn, Thomas Campion, p. 183
112. Belloc, op. cit.. p. 119 (Isabel de Inglaterra)

brought to the stake. Always, before the faggots were lit, all persons were insistently entreated to recant whereby they might have saved their lives and even been the richer for their apostasy. (113) Therefore, it is all to their greater honour that they withstood temptation in the face of an appalling death whose only mitigation was the gunpowder friends and relatives were allowed to bring as a last act of mercy. This, placed in a bag and tied around a prisoner's neck or else placed between his legs, would explode on lighting, the sooner ending life and sufferings.

The great English clerical leaders, who could have fled to safety but preferred to remain, showed the supreme of heroism: Cranmer found at the last moment strength to redeem all his earlier weaknesses by thrusting his hand -the offending right hand that had signed so many recantations- into the flames first and there held it till it was consumed before the rest of his body perished. The aged Latimer went in all serenity and joy to the stake though he could anticipate all the dreadful details of torment by fire. Twenty years before, in 1535, while Bishop of Worcester, he had officiated as preacher when the friar John Ford was burned to death for denying the royal supremacy, and had earnestly if in vain, tried to move him to submission.

---

113. Durant, op. cit. p. 597

From such examples, the host that followed to martyrdom drew inspiration, and the story of their sufferings movingly told by the able propagandist and Marian Exile, Foxe, kept alive the torch they lit at Smithfield.

The unforeseen and brave resistance of the Protestants plus the unforeseen reaction of the public at large to their deaths proved formidable obstacles to the policy of extermination. As it chanced, it was a turning point in history, a moment of shift in values. Then in England, for the first time, "is there an evident sentiment against putting people to death for their religious opinions as distinct from their political acts".(114)

Burning alive, so profoundly shocking to us, was not nearly as much to sixteenth century eyes. So Miss Elizabeth Jenkins affirms: "The punishment of death by fire had been used against heresy for centuries, and it was not the burning itself, but the choice and number of the victims that made the persecution appear abominable to its own time". (115) To her mind, it was the burning of women (sixty is the number estimated), and young women especially, that turned the balance of public disfavour against Mary. Nonetheless, women of all ages, in much greater numbers than six score - for they counted in thousands - had been executed and were to be executed for

---

114. Trevelyan, History of England, p. 322.
115. Jenkins, Elizabeth, Elizabeth the Great, pp. 53,54.

witchcraft in England and Scotland and on the continent without arousing much pity for their cruel deaths.

The Catholic historian, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, analysing the causes for Mary's failure, concludes it was neither the manner nor the number of the executions that made England turn against the Queen, the horrible death by burning being customary for crimes on the civil list such as murder, and people were inured to the inhumanity of the criminal code. Had the executions been carried out in the name of treason, the reaction against them would have been slight, for religious fervour was then at a low ebb and king worship flowing high. What impressed the men and women of the time, he believes, was not death by burning but the reason for that death. "The bulk of the population hated heresy and it hated treason; but the hatred towards heresy was lessening because belief in doctrine was weak". Besides, he adds, it is even probable that had Mary lived for some time the policy of persecution would have in the end triumphed. For "it is a general rule of history that official and implacable action against a minority, especially an unpopular minority, succeeds in arresting any innovation this minority supports."(116)

Another Catholic writer, Professor James Gardiner, believes the numerous deaths were, in a sense, inevitable,

---

116. Belloc, op. cit., p. 56.

for once the kingdom was reconciled to Rome, it followed "almost as a matter of course that the heresy laws should be revived to protect the prevailing religious sentiment against outrages." And "... the law having once passed could not be relaxed", he maintains, "merely because the victims were so numerous, for that would have encouraged the irreverence which it was intended to check". (117)

And then there is Mr. H.W.C.Davis, who runs against the stream of general historical opinion by saying the Marian persecution failed because it was not sufficiently destructive: "The sixteenth century witnessed many epochs of more destructive persecution. But the reaction which the burnings excited was all the greater because they left the great majority of the Protestants untouched. The Queen's severity was sufficient to exasperate, not enough to produce the apathy of despair..."(118)

Mary, it has also been suggested, might have kept some of the popularity she had at the beginning of her reign, when the people of London greeted her entrance with shouts of joy and celebrated the event with bonfires and carolling of bells, had she returned "to the religious compromise of her father's by restoring the Mass in Latin and by burning, discreetly, a dozen Protestants a year".(119)

---

118. Davis, H.W.C., Book of History, VOL.X, p. 4329
119. Trevelyan, History of England, p. 321.

But, surely, this were asking the Queen to act in a Machiavellian manner entirely out of character. She felt her religion too deeply ever to be politic about it. Only once did she deviate from her straightforward path, and this instance later weighed heavily upon her conscience.

King Henry, her father, had been a bundle of contradictions. What makes his personality so difficult to assess fairly, says David Hume, is that "he was so different from himself in different parts of his reign"; at times, he was violent, cruel, obstinate, rapacious, unjust, bigoted, arrogant, capricious... and at others he could be sincere, open, gallant, liberal and capable of temporary love or friendship. (120) Mary, on the other hand, in many ways was extraordinarily consistent - and on what her religious opinions were, no one could harbour doubts.

The psychologist finds much in Mary's girlhood to interpret in terms of repressions, inhibitions, traumas... complexes... and even the most amateur Freudian turns as well to examine her early life for a better understanding or the woman. Her education, as befitted a royal child and the only heir to the throne, was carefully supervised. Queen Katharine taught her Latin, and Mary, unusually precocious, was able to deliver, commendably, an oration in that language at the age of seven. She was, as all

---

120. Hume, David, "Character of Henry VIII".

the Tudors were, singularly gifted as a musician and performed ably on the lute and spinet. For her general instruction Juan Luis Vives was brought from Belgium, Vives, who with Budé and Erasmus was reckoned one of the triumvirs of the republic of letters in the sixteenth century. And while the other two great humanists were held to surpass him in wisdom, Vives exceeded them in rectitude of judgment. He may have deepened or instilled this virtue in his pupil for an unswerving rectitude of mind was a trait of Mary's own.

Henry's feeling for her, in her childhood, was of unbounded pride and affection. But from the moment of Elizabeth's birth, celebrated at court with fanfare and panoply -although her advent had been of some disappointment to the King, for she was not the long-yearned-for Prince for whom he had promised to lead a crusade to the Holy Land- Mary fell into disgrace and suffered virtual banishment. She was deprived of the title of Princess; her retinue was greatly reduced, and those servitors left her could no longer wear on their embroidered jackets her coat of arms, now replaced by the King's, for she was still regarded as a royal child, though illegitimate. She was now called simply Lady Mary, and her mother's title was reduced to that of Princess Dowager.

Separated from Catherine, for whom she felt a

deep filial devotion, she steadfastly refused to recognise Anne Boleyn as other than a usurper, never as Queen of England, or to call Elizabeth Princess of Wales, for that rank, she stoutly maintained belonged to her alone. The ever watchful Chapuys, Imperial Ambassador, set down an incident for the benefit of Charles which shows the Princess' mettle in defending her birthright and the pride she felt in her lineage. When she was asked to render homage to the Princess Elizabeth, 'She replied that she knew no other Princess in England except herself, and that the daughter of Madame de Penebroke had no such title; but it was true that since the King her father acknowledged her to be his, she might call her "sister", as she called the Duke of Richmond "brother"'.(121)

Therefore, the one moment in her early life when she was "unlike herself", stands out in high relief, the once when she denied both her religion and her birthright by acknowledging her father as Supreme Head of the Church and herself as bastard. She had, it is true, been subjected to a great deal of pressure on the part of Cromwell and to a well-intentioned and kind insistence on the part of Queen Jane,(who desired a reconciliation between father and daughter) that she submit to Henry's wishes in this respect as the hard price of being again accepted into his graces.

---

121. Sitwell, Edith, Fanfare for Elizabeth, quot. p. 115

She was in a state of mind bordering despair, physically ill, racked with neuralgic pains in her head that had kept her from sleeping nights on end. She sought the advice of Chapuys who - according to his own account - told her to sign the document submitted to her 'in order to save her life and that of her faithful servants, - her honour and conscience being saved by protests she would make apart, and by the obvious danger...' At this moment Mary had, as an alternative, considered fleeing from the kingdom; but she gave in at last and signed, without reading, a paper which among other statements contains the clause:

> I do recognise, accept, take repute, and acknowledge the King's Highness to be the supreme head on earth under Christ, of the Church of England, and do utterly refuse the Bishop of Rome's pretended authority, power, and jurisdiction within this realm, hitherto usurped, according to the laws and statutes made on that behalf, and of all the King's true subjects humbly received... and after do utterly renounce all manner of remedy, interest, and advantage, which I may by any means claim by the Bishop of Rome's laws, process, jurisdiction and sentence, at this present time, or in any wise hereafter... Item, I do freely, frankly, and for the discharge of my duty towards God, the King's Highness, and his laws, without any other respect, recognise and acknowledge that the marriage heretofore had between his Majesty and my mother, the late princess dowager, was by God's law and man's law incestuous and unlawful. (122)

If the foregoing declaration was all but wrung from Mary, she shortly after confirmed the capitulation

---

122. Sitwell, op. cit., quot. p. 124.

and went the full length of submission and humility by writing a letter to 'Good Mr. Secretary Cromwell' in gratefulness for having helped to bring about the reconciliation with her father. There now was not any spark of obstinacy or wilfulness left in her, she said, and added

> For mine opinion touching pilgrimages, purgatory, relics, and such like: I assure you I have none at all, but such as I shall receive from him who hath my whole heart in his keeping, that is the King's most gracious highness, my most benign father, who shall imprint in the same, touching these matters and all other, what his inestimable virtue, high wisdom, and excellent learning shall think convenient and limit unto me. To whose presence, I pray God, I may come once more ere I die, for every day is a year till I have a fruition of it... (123)

Because of the circumstances this lapse is not held against her, but it may be she held it against herself and in after years found it hard to erase the memory of it from her conscience. She yielded this once quite as much from love as from fear, there is no irony only a great sincerity in her letter to Cromwell, for strangely enough, she felt a deep affection for her father despite his despotism and harsh treatment of her.

That Mary was cast in a narrow mould it is by now needless to emphasise: she lacked the firmness and statecraft of her forbear, Isabella of Castile; she had none of her sister Elizabeth's political insight,

---

123. Strickland, Agnes, Mary I (Lives of the Queens of England)

nor her protean mind, nor her consummate ability to maintain a delicate balance in politics and in religion, and, aware of her limitations, she relied on the advice of others - a misplaced trust - for in her entourage and even in her council there was no one with tact, talent or integrity enough to deal with the many problems facing her. By her first actions as Queen, Mary showed herself by nature generous, free from personal vindictiveness, and honest - she was, in fact, known throughout Europe as 'the most honest of her line'. Even her severest critics can find little fault, on the score of cruelty, with the early part of her reign.

How then, is the transformation from good to evil to be explained, again one asks? It has been laid to mental deterioration: Mary in the end, was overshadowed by the doom of madness that had engulfed her aunt, the hapless Joanna of Castile, and others in her mother's family, Doctor Sitwell believes. (124) And in support of this theory there are Mary's two hysterical pregnancies and pronounced melancholia of the last months of her life when she was wont to sit for hours on the floor, chin resting on her knees, motionless, or else would wander aimlessly and tirelessly through the palace galleries.

---

124. Sitwell, Edith, op. cit., p. 112.

Or, her severity had been ascribed to a guilt-complex for the time she denied alike her creed and her birth-right; or to a desire for vengeance for outrages and humiliations she and her mother had suffered - for once Mary's "morbid ferocity" was aroused, she could be utterly ruthless - although admittedly she was most "merciful in every other matter". (125) Or, to a blind bigotry: Mary was far from being an inhuman creature, she was the most merciful of the Tudors where her own safety and authority were concerned, she was generous to traitors to the point of folly, but when it came to heresy, she was guided by conscience not by personal inclination. (126)

No one seriously disputes today that the policy of blood and fire was mistaken or that it aroused a deep and lasting resentment against the Queen in England. But, who really deserves the greatest blame for the fires lit at Oxford, Norwich or Smithfield? Who originated the persecution and who fostered it? The truth is that to this day we do not know for certain "who led it and who carried it out".(127) Was it Mary, Gardiner, Pole, Bonner, Philip? All have been blamed, she especially, who besides must bear through time the unenviable nickname given her by Foxe. Perhaps the most convincing explanation

---

125. Jenkins, op.cit., p. 53
126. Bindoff, op. cit., p. 178
127. Prescott, H.F.M., op. cit., p. 313

is Doctor Will Durant's, who attributes whatever share she had in the matter not to one but to a number of factors - to an overmeasure of cares and disappointments. A line of demarcation may be drawn at 1555, separating the first phase of her reign, when she may well be called the gentle Queen, from the last when she was involved in the persecution, and this was the year that saw the shipwreck of all her hopes and ambitions.

> Mary was by nature and habit merciful - till 1555. What transformed her into the most hated of English Queens? Partly the provocation of attacks that showed no respect for her person, her faith and her feelings, partly the fear that heresy was the core of political revolt; partly the sufferings and disappointments that had embittered her spirit and darkened her judgment; partly the firm belief of her most trusted advisers, Philip, Gardiner and Pole that religious unity was essential to national solidarity and survival. (128)

Certainly nothing remained at her reign's end of the popularity she had enjoyed at its beginning. The Marian rule can be summed up in one word, sterility. And Mary herself came to realise its barrenness and to attribute the failure of all her hopes, dynastic, religious, personal and patriotic to God's punishment for her laxity in eradicating heresy. Once she had said, 'touching the punishment of heretics, we think

---

128. Durant, op. cit., p. 596.

it ought to be done without rashness...' (129) At the last, she decided to be hesitant no longer, and after the disastrous war with France lost the nation Calais, she actively promoted the persecution.

---

129. Prescott, H.F.M., Mary Tudor, quot.p.311.

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth, a true daughter of the Renaissance, received the broadest education the age could offer both in the new learning and the old, and her accomplishments were varied: "She was a mistress of six languages besides her own, a student of Greek, a superb calligraphist, an excellent musician. She was a connoisseur of painting and poetry. She danced in the Florentine style with a high magnificence that astonished beholders..." (130) So Lytton Strachey writes of her and falls short in enumerating her many gifts and capabilities. She had, as her father before her, a seemingly inexhaustible physical vitality that showed itself in the exercise of hunting, hawking and archery, and a love for pomp and pageantry that made her frequent processions through her realm and all her public appearances, 'works of art by a great player whose heart was in the piece'. She could not, for all this, be described as religious. She failed to share her father's interest, perhaps academic, in theology. This does not mean she was ignorant of the religious problems of the day or was not thoroughly

---

130. Strachey, Lytton, Elizabeth and Essex, p. 18

familiar with the ideas of the reformers; Bernardino Ochino had been her instructor, as had Baldassare Castiglione and Roger Ascham.

When she came to the throne she realised some measures were necessary to re-establish the Church of England as again separate from Rome, and these were to be dictated by political considerations not by religious convictions. Her first care was to settle the matter by assuming the full ecclesiastical supremacy annexed by her father to the Crown, in order to return the Church to its dependence upon the national lay state, with the same entire severance from papal jurisdiction. This was begun when the two Houses passed the fundamental bills of the Elizabethan establishment, of Uniformity and of Supremacy, on the 28th and 29th of April 1559.

Commons made no alteration to either bill, but the acceptance of the Upper House was obtained only because an unusual number of sees were then vacant, and even though all the spiritual peers in the Lords voted against the Acts, they were outweighed. Even the lay peers showed some bias towards the old orthodoxy by trying, without success, to induce Commons to make amendments favourable to Roman Catholicism. Thus, the definition Professor Trevelyan gives of the entire reformation movement in England is in keeping with this

particular stage of its development, for it was "a lay revolution carried out by Crown and Parliament - more specifically by the Crown and Commons - against the will of Church authorities". (131)

Unburdened by a religious conscience, Elizabeth had been able to accept Edward's Protestantism and Mary's Roman Catholicism with equal ease, and what she now demanded of her subjects, outward conformity, was not more than she herself had been willing to give. Indeed, her exact beliefs, for she was reticent on the subject, are a matter of conjecture to historians. She did show some preference, it may be for aesthetic reasons, for a religion of form and ceremony. The chapel royal was adorned with a massive crucifix before which gilded candelabra held lighted tapers. There, too, psalms were sung to organ music and to the accompaniment of cornets, trumpets and the sackbut. The stained-glass windows extant, she ordered to be preserved. In fact, to some foreign observers, the churches had much the same look as of yore, only now the services were conducted in English, the images were gone, and the holy table was placed in the body of the church.

The young Queen's "natural elegance of mind led her to prefer the ritual of the Catholic church,

---

131. Trevelyan, History of England, p. 329.

and she would have found no difficulty in adopting its tenets", admits a recent biographer, (132) had this not run counter to her political plans. With this one may agree. On the other hand, to a person of her temperament, the stern and rigid theology of Calvin could have appealed little, - especially as it was a creed seeking to purify not only each individual person but the nation as well, by bringing it under the sway of religion: such a usurpation of the rightful province of the State must, to the autocratic Elizabeth, have seemed exactly the inverse conception of what things should be.

If doctrine then, failed to concern her in itself, she was profoundly concerned in her royal right to govern the Church, and as a corollary, to dictate on things of worship. So, for the Anglican service she chose the second, or more Protestant, of the Edwardian books, and made personally (the opinion of Convocation was not asked) a few significant changes. Crossed out by her own hand was the petition in the Litany, found in both editions,

> ... from the tyranny of the Bysshop of Rome
> and al hys detestable enormities,
>
> Good Lord, deliver us,

as also, in the Ordinal, the words before the oath to the Queen's sovreignty, ' against the power and authority of the Bysshop of Rome', and other references to the Bishop

---

132. Jenkins, Elizabeth, op. cit. (Elizabeth the Great) p. 63

of Rome by name. Instead was inserted the noncommittal phrase, 'against the power and authority of all foreign potentates'.

As to vestments, those used in the second year of Edward's reign were to be resumed, and the rubric ordering the use of arochet only by priest or deacon was expunged. Also removed was the 'Black Rubric' already referred to , which stated that in kneeling for reception no adoration was intended to a real and essential presence. Furthermore, a master stroke, the two clauses of administration found in the first and second Books of Common Prayer were fused, one implying real presence, the other implying commemoration. The purpose of the piecing together and of the omissions was none other than to make the service more acceptable to the more intransigeant religionists, and to this end, Elizabeth was willing to make a sacrifice of consistency.

To adapt her people cautiously to the new Anglican form was her intention; she had no desire to pry into consciences or to convince by argument or by exposition. A show of conformity was all she then asked and most of the nation complied. Most Puritans and Catholics, to avoid paying a fine of one shilling, attended the parish churches as a duty the government imposed, hoping meanwhile time

would bring about a change favourable to their ideas. Besides, in the sixteenth century, the passage of a law was not necessarily equivalent to its being enforced, for much depended on the good or ill will of the local authorities and on the diligence of professional spies. And the discontent took advantage of the leeway: the Puritans, by holding their conventicles in secret whenever they could, the Catholics by hearing their Mass, and, in case of danger, hiding the officiating cleric in one of the 'priest-holes' which were an architectural detail of many an Elizabethan manor.

As time strengthened the Anglican position, coersion became greater and for open non-conformity the punishment was death; thus for their religious views the dissenters Barrow, Greenwood and Penry were executed, accused of treason and condemned for it, although they were loyal men. But the 1559 Act of Uniformity, contrary to what has been generally supposed in England * was far from lenient. It set penalties of increasing severity for reincidence. A clergyman, for a first offense, would lose all his spiritual benefices or promotions for a year after his conviction, and suffer a six months' imprisonment without bail or mainprize as well; for a second fault he was to be gaoled for a year and lose all his spiritual and material promotions, " as though the person...offending were dead"; and, should he offend a third time, he was to

* Waugh, Evelyn: Thomas Campion, p.101

be deprived ipso facto of his promotions and imprisoned for life. (133)

Ordinary lay people who should in interludes, plays, songs and rhymes, openly speak against the Prayer Book or use any other form of worship other than that ordained, or interfere with an officiating minister, were to forfeit one hundred marks to the Queen. For a second offense of this nature, the penalty was increased to four hundred marks, and a third offense meant deprivation of all goods and chattels and, in addition, imprisonment for life. (134)

The Henrician oath of Suppemacy had been exacted of all subjects under penalty of high treason, the Elizabethan was required only of those persons holding spiritual or temporal offices under the Crown. It was therefore tendered to the Marian Bishops, and with one exception (Kitchen, of Llandaff), the entire bench holding true to the principles they had accepted on preferment, refused to take the oath and were forthwith deprived of their sees. Some of the high churchmen were gaoled, but none suffered death for his abstention. Soon, Elizabeth replenished the bishopless church by drawing largely from the Marian Exiles then returning to England after five years spent in France, Geneva, or the Rhineland.

133,134. Documents of the Christian Church, "Act of Uniformity of 1559" pp. 333,335.

The attitude of the parochial clergy is less clear. Because of the almost total loss of Church Records during the great fire of London, it is impossible to estimate with exactitude the number of the lesser clerics who accepted Elizabeth's supremacy. Out of a generally estimated 9,000 beneficed clergy, the number of those in conformity is given by different historians in widely differing figures that range from 177 to 7,000. Maitland gives the number as 200, Powicke as 300, Pollard as 1000,(135) Waugh as 500(136) and Trevelyan as 7,000.(137) Beesly quotes the entire number as having been 9,200 and says that those who did not acquiesce were 200, but he adds, " the number must have been understated for bishops had difficulty for a long time in finding clergymen for parish churches." (138)

Some of the dispossessed - were they few or many- abandoned the country, the rest remained in England without leaving a perceptible imprint on the sands of time as they passed from their positions of parish priests to live out their lives in the obscurity of other ordinary subjects of the Queen.

Knowing the mass of the nation Catholic at heart, Elizabeth cast her lot with the rising Protestant minority. There is no reason to think her decision

---

135. Bindoff, op. cit. p. 193
136. Trevelyan, History of England, p. 329
137. Waugh, Evelyn, Thomas Campion, p. 25 *
138. Beesly, op. cit. p. 21

* Mr Evelyn Waugh has dedicated himself to works of fiction. rather than to those of history, yet in his Thomas Campion. he has shown his capacity for competent and exact historical research.

other than a voluntary act, or that any one coerced her, for one may well discount her confidences, two years after her accession, to the Spanish ambassador DeQuadra, that her belief was the belief of the Catholics in her realm. When, most naturally, he asked why then she had altered religion in 1559, she replied she had been compelled, driven, to act as she did. Seven years later she made a similar statement to De Silva, the then envoy from Spain. These assertions, however, by one apt in political prevarication and ambiguity, may be taken with a grain of salt. No one forced her hand, the decision, a wise one as it turned out, was her own.

Elizabeth's first intention was to assume the title of Supreme Head of the Church and a bill to the effect was presented to Parliament. Soon, the new title of Supreme Governour with its suggestion of administrative rather than doctrinal power was chosen. To us today the difference seems slight, especially since the nature of the headship remained the same, but it proved less objectionable to those who felt some compunction at conferring this distinction on a woman and to those who disliked the Supreme Headship altogether.

That one as secular minded as Elizabeth should have left as the most abiding mark of her reign on the national life of England the government, worship and

doctrine of the Anglican Church is a paradox. This she was able to accomplish partly by her tenacity and partly by her longevity. Many years passed before she had any measure of success but her steadfastness of purpose never wavered. Where she began with a religious compromise she ended up with a religion. In four decades a generation and more had grown up in reverence and love for Queen and Church, a generation and more for whom the beautiful Crammerian liturgy had become a part of its spiritual and national heritage.

PURITANISM

In the fifth year of Elizabeth's reign a movement became discernible within the fold of the Anglican Church that enriched the English language by a new word: Puritanism. According to Thomas Fuller in his Church History, the term first came into use in 1564 yet the roots of Puritanism are deeply imbedded in the soil of England if the term implies a desire for greater simplicity of life and strictness of worship. It is present in Piers the plowman and Bunyan the tinker whose writings show a spiritual and imaginative kinship though their lives are three centuries apart.

Puritanism was an attitude towards life and a theory of society; in a narrower sense, it fitted into a number of different compartments, the 'hundred sects' that drew the notice of Voltaire, and it exerted an enormous influence in the old world and the new. The word, initially used in a derogatory way, designated loosely if conveniently those seeking to restore purity and beauty to the Anglican Church by banishing from it all resemblance to the Church of Rome in liturgical ceremonies and clerical vestments.

The removal from office of the the Marian bishops, save one, had forced the Queen to refill the empty episcopal bench with men drawn from the ranks of the returned exiles, and for long she was troubles in finding candidates not so extremely Protestant in their views that they could not follow her guidance and plan of stabilizing the Church. The first Elizabethan Primate, Matthew Parker, a mild and scholarly man , had not fled abroad during Mary's reign, when for his support of Northumberland , and for being a married cleric, he had been deprived of all his preferments; for, having been left otherwise unmolested, he had remained at home in retirement. Hence, unlike the majority of his brethren , he had not drunk of the cold waters of Geneva at their very source . He was somewhat distrustful of the high-wrought enthusiasts then returning in droves from the continent, joyfully returning, in hopes of remodelling under a Protestant sovereign, the ecclesiastical establishment along the lines of Geneva - a refashioning they intended should come from within the church itself. All in all the exiles had shown themselves a difficult and contentious lot, whose wranglings and disputations had been an open scandal. So conscientious and individualistic were they that efforts made to unite them all under a common programme before their return to England had failed utterly.

Indiscriminately the Archbishop referred to the

group as Precisian, Presbyterian or Puritan. To him all exterior details of worship whether 'cap, tippet, or wafer bread' mattered little, so he found acceptable the clerical habits prescribed by the Act of Uniformity of 1559, which retained most of the traditional vestments: cope, alb and chasuble at Communion, and at other times, the surplice. What mattered greatly to him was that royal and episcopal authority should be respected. No doubt if Parker found the Marian Exiles over-scrupulous, over-precise, they found him incredibly retrograde and were resentful of the repressive measures against them he dictated.

To enforce uniformity of worship was a hard task he soon found out. The investigation of 1565 showed that at some places prayers were read from the body of the church, at others from the chancel; the prescribed Book of Common Prayer was used at some parishes while in others not. Some celebrants wore surplices, others preferred to dispense with the surplice altogether. And at Communion, sometimes a common cup was used, sometimes a chalice, sometimes people knelt to receive, sometimes they stood, sometimes they sat... (139)

Archbishop Parker did his best to bring some semblance of order to the prevailing confusion by his

---

139. Brook, V.J.K., Whitgift and the English Church, p.22.

'Advertisements' of 1566. In these, on his own initiative, he set a minimum observance acceptable, for some ancient usages he felt were needful to preserve the continuity of the Anglican Church with the past. He specified, among other things, that every clergyman at public prayers or when administering the sacraments should wear " a comely surplice with sleeves", and that every parish should provide, at its own cost, " a decent table standing on a frame" for the Communion. This was to be covered with a cloth, or with silk or other "decent covering", and over it all placed "a fair linen cloth"; and also that for reception of the sacrament, all communicants should kneel. (140)

Secular politics were beyond Parker's scope and interest; he was never even admitted to the Queen's privy council, but he took infinite pains over the ecclesiastical problems. Under his presidency the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion were finally reviewed and subscribed to by the clergy in 1562 and by Parliament in 1571, for, characteristically, Elizabeth had in 1559 hastily settled the matter of church government, which immediately concerned her, and that of worship, which concerned the people, but had let doctrine, of concern to the clergy, (which might logically have been settled first) wait for her greater leisure.

Beset by great difficulties Parker struggled

---

140. Parker, Matthew, Archbishop "Advertisements" (G and H, LXXXI) Documents of the Christian Church, pp.336,337,338.

all his life to check the individualistic tendencies of the reforming extremists, for he saw the dispute over vestments was being enlarged into a dispute over church government and authority. If this mutinous individualism were not reined in, things might go in England the way they had in Scotland: 'God keep us', he once exclaimed, 'from such a visitation as Knox has attempted... the people to be the orderers of things!' (141) He died in 1575, a disappointed man, lamenting that Puritan ideas would in the end be the Queen's undoing. (142)

When Edmund Grindal succeeded to the see of Canterbury, he, on the other hand, was loth to execute the judgments passed on the Puritans, for reasons of conscience, since he was not a convinced Erastian. Queen and Archbishop were to differ on many points, one of them was the matter of the 'prophesyings' or religious exercises which, following the advice of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, 'Ye may all prophesy, that all may learn and all be comforted', the Puritans frequently held. At a glance the meetings, semi-academic, semi-theological, seemed harmless enough, even usefully instructive, limited as they were at first to clerics and conducted in Latin; but in fact they could be seedbeds of dissension.

---

141. Brook, V.J.K., op. cit.,quot. p. 21.
142. Pollard, Albert Frederick, "Matthew Parker", Enc. Britt. Vol. XX p. 829.

Together with other bishops, Grindal thought the conferences and discussions useful if adequately supervised, so he laid down rules for the conduct of the 'prophesyings' without suppressing them. In failing to support the Queen's wishes, he earned her displeasure and consequently, was suspended from his jurisdictional functions as archbishop though allowed to continue in his spiritual ones. Confined to his house for a six months' space, he remained obdurate and so he was kept sequestered till his death.

Elizabeth's third and last Primate, the able, energetic, and much hated Whitgift, proved a man entirely suited to her purpose, for although some of his theological ideas were similar to those held by the non-conformists he harried, in the interests of uniformity he cast these beliefs aside and for many years rendered yeoman service to the Queen's policy in religion.

CALVINISM

In the two centuries after the Reformation, the most influential form of Protestantism derived in one way or another from the teachings of Calvin. "Unlike Lutheranism from which it sprang," writes Professor Tawney, "Calvinism, assuming different shapes in different countries became an international movement, which brought not peace but a sword, and the path of which was strewn with revolutions ... Calvinism was an active and radical force. It was a creed which sought not merely to purify the individual by penetrating every department of life, public as well as private, with the influence of religion." (143)

Two years after Luther nailed his theses to the church door at Wittenberg, Calvin's fundamental work, the Christianae Religionis Institutio, appeared. Built upon foundations laid by Luther and other reformers, it has as a starting point the conception of God's infinite and transcendent sovereignty, and holds that the supreme end of human endeavour is to know Him and to follow his precepts. This, man is able to do through a knowledge of Scripture, whose writers were the true amanuenses of

---

143. Tawney, op. cit., p.81 (Religion and the Rise of Puritanism)

the Holy Spirit. Wholly inspired by God, the Bible stands as the irrefutable and highest law and guide to man in this life. Besides drawing inspiration from Holy Writ, Calvin also consulted the writings of Saint Paul and Saint Augustine. In De Civitate Dei the Bishop of Hippo had touched upon fore-ordination and emphasized the over-ruling will of God. (144) Also, in De dono perseverantiae, he wrote:

> Will any man presume to say that God did not foreknow those to whom He would grant belief? And if He foreknew this, then He certainly foreknew his own kindness, with which He vouchsafes to deliver us. This, and nothing but this, is the predestination of saints, namely the foreknowledge and planning of God's kindnesses, by which they are most surely delivered, whoever are delivered. As for the rest, where are they left by God's righteous judgment save in the mass of perdition where they of Tyre and Sidon were left? And they, moreover, would have believed, had they seen the wondrous miracles of Christ. But it was not granted them to believe, and therefore the means of believing was denied them. From this it is clear that some have in their minds a gift of understanding naturally divine,

---

144. Saint Augustine: La Ciudad de Dios

"Dios creó al hombre recto, como verdadero autor de las naturalezas y no de los vicios, pero como éste se depravó de su propia voluntad, y por ello fué justamente condenado engendró asimismo hijos malvados y condenados. (Libro 13, cap. 13, 14.)

... y en el primer hombre nació toda la plenitud del linaje humano, en la cual previó Dios la parte que había de ser condenada y castigada.

Porque en él habían de nacer unos para venirse a juntar con los ángeles buenos en el premio eterno por oculto pero justo juicio de Dios." (Libro 14, Libro 12, Cap. 28.)

> by which they may be moved to faith... yet if they are not, in the higher judgment of God, separated from the mass of perdition by the predestination of grace, then neither those words or those deeds are applied to them. (145)

On the other hand, the Jews were left to perdition because they refused to believe the works done before their very eyes. For as the prophet Isaiah said 'He... blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes and understand with their heart, and be converted...' The men of Tyre and of Sidon were neither blinded nor hardened; they would have believed had miracles been performed before them, as before the Jews.

> But their capacity for belief availed them nothing because they were not so predestinated by Him whose judgments are inscrutable and whose ways past finding out... (146)

To Calvin, Saint Augustine in such passages was not explicit enough. He failed to carry the idea of election to its logical conclusions; he shrank from the straightforward acknowledgement of the truth for fear of opening to blasphemers a window for their slanders concerning the works of God. "Even Saint Augustine", wrote Calvin, "is not always emancipated from that superstitious fear; as when he says (of Predestination and Grace) that 'hardening' and 'blinding' refer not to the operation of God, but to his foreknowledge". (147)

---

145. "De dono perseverantiae", Documents of the Christian Church, p. 80
146. Ibid. p. 80
147. Ibid. Christianae Religionis Institutio , Calvini Op.11 sq. (edition of 1559) Documents of the Christian Church p. 299

God foreordains whatever comes to pass, and in His hidden but just decree has fixed on those who will receive salvation, and those who, as immutably, will be forever lost. By his transgression Adam involved the human race from him descended, in sin and guilt. Created in God's likeness, Adam through his sin and fall diffused corruption to all men. Man, even from his mother's womb is inclined to evil; he has not yet, it is true, brought forth the seeds of depravity, but has the seeds in him. Man's entire nature is a seedbed of sin, therefore hateful and abominable to God: "Whatever is in man, from intellect to will, from the soul to the flesh, is all defiled and crammed with concupiscence; or, to sum it up briefly... the whole man is in himself nothing but concupiscence". (148)

So depraved is man in all his nature that he is justly condmned, - for to God righteousness, innocence and purity alone are acceptable. Withal, no man bears the guilt and the punishment for the sin of another:

> ... for when it is said that we through Adam's sin have become obnoxious to the divine judgement, it is not taken as if we, being ourselves innocent and blameless, bear the fault of the offense, but that we, having been brought under a curse through his transgression, he is said to have bound us. From him however, not only has punishment overtaken us, but a pestilence instilled from him resides in us, to which punishment is justly due.

---

148. Calvin, John, Institutio (edition of 1559) quot. Documents of the Christian Church, pp. 298,299.

> Thus, even infants, while they bring their own condemnation with them even from their mother's womb are bound not by another's but by their own fault. For though they have not yet brought forth the seeds of their iniquity, they have the seeds shut up in them... (149)

Wholly unable to be good through his own efforts, man may repent and receive forgiveness through regenerating Grace, God's favour to His undeserving creature.

To redeem man Christ became incarnate and assumed man's nature with His own, and by His humiliation, suffering and death merited for man the Grace of salvation. Nonetheless, in forming the decree of Election, God is sovereign and in Him alone is the motive which leads Him to set apart a certain fixed number of souls to perish in eternal damnation. (150) The sacraments Calvin accepted were two: baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism, of course, had no effect in effacing the guilt of original sin, it is the exterior sign of initiation whereby men are admitted to the society of the elect.

---

149. Calvin, J. Christianae Religionis Institutio
150. ibid,

PRESBYTERIANS , CONGREGATIONALISTS, AND INDEPENDENTS.

The influence of Calvin's Institutes on seventeenth century England was profound. Seldom anywhere has one book made a greater impact on the ethos and religious thought of a people, for from Calvinist teachings Puritanism stems in a vigorous, idiosyncratic way. Like the green bay tree it grew even in an unpropitious soil, under the distrusting and watchful eyes of a hostile government, to produce strange and varied fruit. Imported as a foreign notion in the fifteen-sixties, Calvinist-imbued Puritanism had become rootedly and characteristically English by the first decades of the next century, the period of its most rapid expansion. By then there were many forms of doctrine and practice, the same tenets having inspired the idea of a Church State as well as intense religious individuality. In truth, so complex and absorbing a movement as the Puritan proved to be, cannot be summarized briefly without attributing to it a unity greater than it really had.

As the century moved forward it became increasingly evident that whatever differences there were among

Puritans as to ritual, they were dividing into two great bands as to the for of church government desireable, the Presbyterian and the Congregationalist, the two showing more and more openly their hatred of prelacy. Presbyterians and Congregationalists alike partook of Puritanism, yet the Puritan spirit was something over and beyond the two forms. They shared a common doctrine but Puritanism was a force " more widely diffused, more pervasive, and more potent than either."(151)

Broadly speaking, the episcopal government with supreme authority residing in the diocesan bishops, the See of Canterbury above all, may be called monarchical; the Presbyterian, with church councils composed of representative presbyters, representative; and the Congregational, formed by members of a congregation, democratic. By far the strongest of the dissenting bodies, the Presbyterian group believed the primitive church had been governed by a sequence of synods or representative assemblies, while the Congregationalists held there had never been one unified church, only groups of churches, and that each individual congregation should be formed by a democracy of 'visible saints' admitted to full communion upon exhibiting satisfactory evidence they had been chosen by God. Presbyterians and Congregationalists grounded themselves on the Bible, the repository of all religious

151.Tawney, R.H., Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, p. 165

truth and all authoritative revelation concerning ecclesiastical organization, only they differed in interpreting Scripture. The Congregationalists rejected the judicial system of Presbyterianism as undue interference with the rights of a local body, as they rejected supervision by the episcopate. For them the cohesive element of a church was the covenant, an agreement the members made with the Almighty and with one another, to live as children of God saved by Christ, to be united in worship and in seeking the welfare of their society, whose discipline they accepted. No group of Christians had the right to control any other, but if the need arose, a congregation could, and indeed should, offer friendly advice to a sister community, thus in practice no important decision was made without counsel from other friendly aggregations.

The nucleus then, was the congregation with its component members,the saints. The question was, how were they to be found? How recognised? Calvin's idea of election prevailed. For his unsearchable designs, God alone knew who the chosen were; men could not positively know till the sounding of the last trump. In the meantime, as it was the duty of every believer to join the church, a practical, human, if not infallible, way was found to distinguish the saints from the doomed. The former, according to the Cambridge Platform of 1649, were

> Such as have not only attained the knowledge of the principles of religion, and are free from gross and open scandals, but also do, together with the profession of their faith and repentance, walk in blameless obedience to the word... (152)

Men and women such as these might charitably be accounted saints, although some among them might be unsound and but dissembling hypocrites. So strict was the act of initiation, however, that probably few wolves in sheeps' clothing found their way by guile or stealth into the fold of the elect.

Thomas Lechford's contemporary account gives us details of how the selection was made: a man or woman hoping for church membership was first examined carefully by the local Elders as to faith, morals, Scriptural knowledge, and vocation. If the Elders were satisfied, there followed a public examination on the Sabbath, sometimes by question and answer, at others by a solemn speech made by the postulant, whereby the work of God on his soul was made patent to all. Action and conduct in themselves availed nothing towards salvation - the divine decree being unchangeable - none the less, action and conduct served as intimations of the divine decision, to show salvation had been attained.

Courage and conviction were needed for the soul-searing experience, and even eligible candidates may have hesitated to undergo all the examinations, avowals and confessions. But some sort of an ordeal it was

152. The Cambridge Platform, quot. Mather, Cotton, Magnalia Christi Americana, Book II, p. 213.

intended to be, so those lacking in faith would be deterred from trying to join the ranks of the chosen ones. It was, the Reverend Cotton Mather later affirmed, much as when in olden times the Jews placed a scarecrow at the top of their temple to frighten away the fowls that otherwise would sully it, for " none but the Defilers of the Temple would be kept out by such a Scare-Crow." Certainly, the doors of the churches of Christ on earth should not stand so wide open that all sorts of people, good and bad, might freely enter; but the Elders were cautioned against using severity too extreme in their questionings. They were to exercise the greatest care in seeking for the weakest measure of faith in those wishing admittance, and to bear in mind "the Lord Jesus would not quench the smoking flax nor break the bruised reed, but gather the tender lambs in His arms and carry them gently in His bosom." (153)

Among the early Puritans, a minority despised by the brethren for their radical views, were the Separatists, or Independents, or Brownists, so-called after a controversial figure, Robert Browne, Cantabridgian and graduate of Corpus Christi College, who violently impugned the episcopal order and thrice suffered imprisonment before he broke away to lead a group of his congregation in flight to Holland. He refused to accept Calvin's thesis that reform should wait until the state took action, for the Kingdom of God was, he thought, ' not to be begun by whole parishes

153. Mather, C., Magnalia Christi Americana Book V, p. 244

but rather by the worthiest, were they ever so few."(154) To Browne, Saint Paul's words were clear and compelling: 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate... and touch not the unclean thing'.

Established at Middleburgh in Holland with a small company, Browne published ther in 1582 two works fundamental in Congregationalist thought and doctrine, the Treatise of Reformation without Tarying for Anie , which asserts the unalienable right of the Chruch to effect necessary reforms without authorization from civil magistrates, and a Booke which Sheweth the Life and Manners of all True Christians, an enunciation of the theory of Congregational independence.

Dissention among the expatriates broke up the community in less than two years. Browne himself returned to England and soon after, in 1585, made a complete submission to the episcopate. A further submission cleared the way for him to obtain the Mastership of Saint Olave's Grammar School in Southwark, and at last,-without abandoning controvery altogether- he accepted episcopal ordination and the rectory of Achurch-cum-Thorpe in Northamptonshire, where he exercised the ministry for almost half a century. But if Browne could adopt an attitude of compromise -or of expedience merely- some of his congregation remained in the Netherlands, and in due time were fated to make another, more epic migration to America.

154. Willison, Saints and Strangers, quot.. p. 31

CONCLUSION

In common with European christendom, the Church of England by the late middle ages had suffered a decay in morals and in faith - although its corruption never was as great as that of the continental countries. This state of affairs did not pass unnoticed. For long there had been complaints raised against clerical laxity: monk , friar or priest were bitterly criticised by great or lesser contemporary writers. There had even been some attempt at reform. Episcopal visitors on their rounds inveighed against the evils they found in convent and monastery as they tried, with indifferent success, to tighten the relaxed bonds of discipline.

Of the regular branch only the Carthusians and the Bridgetines had kept strict seclusion and adherence to their rule, so that they may be accounted a group unsullied and apart. The high bright ideal of early monachism had been almost forgotten, and many religious houses now harboured the vocationless, those who had donned the habit for their own benefit and convenience.

The secular branch of the Church had fallen below desire in morality also. Many a high churchman held

several benefices at once (which he could not possibly attend to) and received revenues from them all. With the Crown the secular prelates had an old alliance, one sanctioned by tradition and generally accepted, the royal preferments implying for the clerical recipient, gratitude and fealty to the giver. The King disposed of Church livings as a means of paying his civil servants without having to dip into the royal coffers. Rarely was this tacit agreement openly challenged, as it had been in the twelfth century when Thomas of Canterbury was forced to decide whose part he should take, the King's or the Pope's - or, as he had come to see it, the part of the Church. That he should have wavered in his loyalty to his sovereign some thought open treason. In his masterly imaginative re-creation of Becket's spiritual struggle, Mr T.S. Eliot has the knights sent by the angry King taunt the Archbishop with these words:

> You are the Archbishop in revolt against the King;
> in rebellion to the King and the law of the land;
> You are the Archbishop who was made by the King;
> whom he set in your place to carry out his command.
> You are his servant, his tool, and his jack,
> You wore his favours on your back,
> You had your honours all from his hand; from him
> you had the power, the seal and the ring...(154)

154. Eliot, T.S. - Murder in the Cathedral, p. 59

Becket's rebelliousness was indeed exceptional; when more than a century afterwards Henry VIII called upon the secular clergy to follow his leadership as Supreme Head of the Anglican Church, he was to find most of them acquiescent.

Wycliffe's fourteenth century movement had in it elements nationalistic and schismatic. Earlier interested in politics than in reform, he began his campaign against Rome when Papal prestige was at its lowest, and his attacks, insofar as they were concerned with reducing the temporal power of the Papacy were supported at court. The statutes of Praemunire and of Provisors show that anticurial and patriotic winds, if intermittently, were then blowing. There was a new and growing sense of the advantages of insularity, a drift towards the idea that the resources of England should, by rights, belong to Englishmen. But when Wycliffe passed from the political to the dogmatic side of controversy to question the significance of the Eucharist, one of the fundamental dogmas of the medieval Church, he lost much of his former support. Those of the Gauntian party, not in the least averse in increasing the power of the monarch, nor his wealth, were loth to go beyond the pale, into heresy.

The wayside preachings of the 'povre prestis' left a mark on public memory. All about the country they had gone and their message had received an eager response. Faggot and persecution did away with some of

the heretics, fear silenced others, yet the Lollard teachings did not die out, they were preserved by surreptitious readings of forbidden tracts, and even more so by oral tradition. As the century progressed Lollardry gained ground -its effect being ultimate rather than near- and it served to prepare England for a more ready acceptance of the Tudor changes when they came. Even so, the age Chaucer lived in was Catholic at heart, with the great mass of people accepting the tenets of the Church without question. Religion was in the fore or in the background of men's thoughts. No one could escape being reminded of it constantly, perhaps by seeing an itinerant friar chatting and drinking at a village inn, or a little knot of nuns off to a pilgrimage, or a well-fed monk, evidently more at home in the outer world than within his monastery walls. As the largest, most beautiful and significant edifices in villages of hovels, the churches themselves stood out, their steeples and bell-towers overtopping all else. Or, if a man were busy at some craft or task there were bells for him to hear, from the early ones calling to morrow-Mass at dawn to those pealing for even-song at dusk. English bell ringers became very proficient in their calling, felt pride in it, and made their bells speak in a language to all familiar.

The vernacular translation of Scripture the Lollards made deserves mention and praise for being the first of its kind in England. Pre-Wycliffite renderings had been fragmentary, as the orthodox clerical view was not for an open Bible' to be put into the hands of the laity in general. Later, Sir Thomas More affirmed he had seen Biblical versions earlier than Wycliffe's, bearing the episcopal imprimatur , a statement which modern research has not proven - or for that matter, absolutely disproven. But there was undoubtedly " an exclusive spirit" on the part of Church authorities with respect to the reading of Scripture, and some Popes and councils went so far as to ban the rendering of the Bible into the vernacular languages.(155)

For its great length the Bible or the Bibliotheca, as it was often called, was costly to produce in manuscript. The richest of English monasteries could not provide one copy for each monk therein lodged. Even doctors of divinity were not required to know the book in its entirety - and as for parish priests, so little above their parishioners in learning- they would probably have been unable to understand a Bible , had they owned one, for

155. Coulton, G.G. Medieval Panorama, pp. 682,685

its price was more than most parsons could earn in a year.

In the main, polemical divinity was left to the schoolmen, and at Oxford, defending their rival philosophies, Nominalists and Realists clashed. There the Minorites, after embracing knowledge with the zeal their founder had embraced poverty, had produced scholars outstanding and renowned. One theological problem, however, did intrigue medieval men of questioning minds, the problem of determinism and foreordination. It was a topic for passionate discussion everywhere, even among those whose interests were other than religious. Geoffrey Chaucer in his Nonne's Prestes' Tale discusses it and, as a digression in the story he is telling us of the love of Troilus and Cressidas , again brings up the matter - for it had caught his imagination and was yet unresolved: that is, the seemingly contradictory idea that while man had freedom of choice , God knows beforehand how an individual will act in determinate circumstances. The scholastic solution was that through 'conditional necessity' God foresees what will come to pass, a foreknowledge that in no way inhibits man's free will. God knows but does not force human volition. And, to explain those things beyond man's power to alter, such as the fall of rain or the eruption of a volcano, there was ' simple

necessity'. Chaucer comments:

Then there is this opinion held by some,
Whose tonsured foreheads quite imposing shine;
They say whatever happens does not come
Because foreknowledge sees with fixed design
That come it must, but rather they incline
To say that come it will, and reason so,
That such foreknowledge doth but merely know.

You see that I am trying to find out
Just what is cause and what is consequence;
Is God's foreknowledge cause beyond a doubt
As necessary in his plan prepense
Of all the human things we call events,
Or does necessity in them reside
And thus ordaining cause for them provide?

But still I don't quite know what to believe!
For there have been great scholars, many a one,
Who say that destined fate we must receive,
Yet others prove that this need not be done,
And that free choice has been denied to none.
Alack, so sly they are, these scholars old,
I can't make out what doctrine I should hold!

(155)

155. Chaucer, Geoffrey: Troilus and Cressida, pp. 214,215, 213.

Having grappled with the problem, turned it over and over again in his mind, there remained in the end the same dilemma. So he leaves it to the theologians to sift the kernels of truth from the chaff of doubt.

More than a hundred years after Chaucer, John Calvin -basing himself on Scripture and on Saint Paul and Saint Augustine- resolved the baffling question by his interpretation of the overruling will and justice of God, which eliminated free will altogether. The new doctrine came as the right answer at last for many who accepted it with all their hearts.

At odds with the Pope and in dire financial straits, Henry VIII cut the Gordian knot of his troubles by separating his realm from the tutelage of Rome and by annexing church properties to the Crown. Once decided upon, the dissolution of the religious houses was quickly achieved: abbeys lesser and greater, then monasteries were confiscated, the operation producing ample, if not quite sufficient funds for the King's exchequer. He was getting ready to take over the chantries when death stayed his hand. But, all told, the Henrician changes in religion were few and most of them conservative. The process Henry followed was to assume and exercise the rights and privileges of headship and then to have these legally recognised, so that indeed, " royal

supremacy had become a fact before it was erected into a principle." (156) In 1531 Convocation heard for the first time, in stony silence, of the King's new prerogatives, a silence which was taken for approval. Two years later, in 1533, the statute for Restraint of Appeals enounced the legal theory behind the move already taken. This document emphasizes the self-sufficiency of the English Church and the King's right to command obedience from the entire body politic of his realm, temporality and spirituality. The Church by now was large enough and of sufficient knowledge and integrity to depend upon itself without intromision from any foreign power. Any appeal to the Pope was needless and had proven inconvenient for the wide distance separating Rome and England. Many delays and troubles there had been hitherto in the determination of cases consulted, such as rights of tithes, suits of matrimony and of divorce, or testamentary causes. Hence, it was determined that the King alone had plenary right and power to decide all cases whatsoever in the temporal or in the spiritual courts of the kingdom, regardless of any excommunication a foreign potentate might impose. If, from fear of any such fulmination from abroad, the English clergy should refuse to administer the sacraments according to English law, they were liable to a year's imprisonment for each refusal,

156. Bindoff, S.T.- Tudor England, p. 94

and to the payment of a fine at the King's pleasure.(157)

The Dispensations Act of the year following, 1534, enounced the ecclasiastical principle for the secession in a Parliamentary address to the throne. Open complaint was made of Papal exactions to the English Church, in pensions, Peter-pence, procurations, fruits and the like. Also the Pope had abused and beguiled the King's subjects by pretending he had full power to dispense laws - all in derogation of the sovereign's rights and authority and against all conscience. Yet Parliament, while recognising no superior under God but the King, asserted that neither he nor any one of his subjects intended to decline or vary

> ... from the congregation of Christ's church in any things concerning the very articles of the Catholic faith of Christendom, or in any other things declared by Holy Scripture and the word of God...(158)

any modification made in the future would be for the sake of peace, unity and tranquillity and to keep the kingdom from spoil and ravin.

In 1536 the King drew up the Ten Articles of Religion and presented them to Convocation for approval. They, too, introduced few doctrinal changes. By means of the Sunday services the new dispensation was diffused in all the land. The clergy were enjoined to stress

157. Restraint of Appeals, 1533 , Hnery VII, cap.12,- Statutes of the Realm , iii, 427 .- Documents of the Christian Church, pp. 306,307,310.
158. The Dispensations Act,1534, 25 Henry VIII, cap.21- Statutes of the Realm,iii, 464- Documents of the Christian Church , p. 319

both the royal headship and the former usurpations of the Bishop of Rome. Every Sunday for three months the topics were to be broached, and thereafter at least twice every quarter of the year. Besides, superstitious practices, such as the veneration of relics or statues and the going on pilgrimages were to be eradicated. People were to be reminded that charity begins at home and that money spent on tapers and the like were far better employed in caring for the needs of their own families. And the familiar prayers were to be taught in English: by frequent oral repetition, sentence by sentence, the congregations were to learn the Pater Noster or the Creed in their mother tongue - the obscure passages being fully explained. Then, at the Lenten confessions, the priests were to examine each individual parishioner to see if he knew and understood his prayers. If he did not, he was to be exhorted to continue the memorizing before approaching the Communion board.(159)

By Easter of 1538 the Matthew Bible large, beautiful, and complete, was by the King's order placed in an accessible place of every church in the country, (its expense being defrayed in equal parts by the parson and his parishioners). Now Bible reading was to be encouraged, with the sole proviso that people ought

159. The Royal Injunctions 1536, Cranmer's Register, fol 97. b. (Gee and Hardym lxII) The Injunctions were presented by Thomas Cromwell to the people, in his capacityof the King's'viceregent'.

to avoid

> all contention and altercation therein, and to use an honest sobriety in the inquisition of the true sense of the same, and refer to the explications of obscure places to men of higher judgement in Scripture...(160)

With evident happiness the Bible-hungry subjects of his majesty resorted to parish churches and cathedrals to enjoy the new privilege to the full, with high hopes it was to be the 'open Bible' so long awaited. Unfortunately, the recommendation to consult expert opinion on the difficult passages of Holy Writ was disregarded: people liked to read and to find their own meanings. This made the King reconsider his bounty and restrict Bible reading to the higher and most learned classes alone.

The promulgation of the Six Articles of Religion, popularly known as the 'bloody whip of six strings' came the next year, 1539. Now it was plain to everyone there were no further doctrinal changes intended. For, the brief statement of the beliefs permissible in England thenceforward categorically affirmed transubtantiation:

> in the most blessed Sacrament of the altar... is present really, under the form of bread and wine, the natural body and blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ... and after the consecration there remaineth no substance of the

160. Royal Injunctions Ibid. fol. 215 b (G. and H. LXIII) op. cit. pp. 325, 26

bread and wine...(161) but the substance of Christ, God and man.
The validity of private Masses, of auricular confession, of Communion in one kind, and of clerical celibacy was upheld, as agreeable to the law of God.

Thus ended the Henrician rule on a note of religious conservatism. The Edwardian, on the other hand, brought significant changes in ritual and in dogma; the two Books of Common Prayer then published being landmarks historical, religious and literary. The first book cautiously presented innovations with the intent of making them acceptable both to Romanists and to Protestants; the second, showed a frank bias towards Protestantism: it eliminated many of the old sacerdotal vestments and modified ritual, but above all, it altered the significance of the Eucharist and transformed the sacrifice of the altar into a service of commemoration.

Mary Tudor's determined return to the old faith failed in its intent, but it may have served to counterbalance the extreme Protestant trend of the previous reign. On their return to England the Marian exiles brought back Calvinist notions with them, but they did not try - as Knox had in Scotland- to set up a separate and distinct religion in their homeland.

161. The Six Articles Act, 31, Henry VIII, cap. 14: Statutes of the Realm, iii, 739 (Documents of the Christian Church, pp. 328,329.

...th its strong Calvinist leaven, Puritanism was English to the core. Under Elizabeth it is first discernible as a movement to depurate, from the inside, the Anglican Establishment, for everyone then conformist or not, believed as did the Queen in the ideal of one united Church of England,- an ideal that was not abandoned until after the Civil War.

Circumstances forced Elizabeth to give some of the Puritan clerics high places in the Church, but for years she strove to curb their too radical ideas. The idea of toleration was not of the times; if her subjects hewed to the line she had drawn, well and good. If not, she could be ruthless in quelling open non-conformity. Instinctively she distrusted and 'misliked' the Precisians. They were not Erastian. They, who preferred a presbytery to a King were, she decided, ' a sect of perilous consequence'. Her native ability, her long life, and her firm determination made it possible for her to follow a via media of her own devising. She unified in the long run, religious observance but she failed to unify religious thought. So it was that Puritans of a later day such as John Bunyan, complained the English Reformation had never been fulfilled. He scoffed at the Anglican compromise in religion by calling the Church Mr Facing-two-ways , or Master Parson Two-Tongues. In his opinion the Anglican Establishment was neither fish nor fowl -if anything more inclined to Papacy than to

the truth of God.

The moving impulse in Puritanism was the predestinatarian creed, a creed that , on the face of it, should reduce a believer to apathy and despair. But on the contrary, it engendered in the convinced sectary a sense of high pride and purpose. Spells of dejection a Puritan might have but he soon succeeded in extricating himself from the slough of Despond. The conviction of being -above so many others- God chosen buoyed him up. Bunyan's Pilgrim exemplifies this attitude: bearing a heavy load of sin and guilt on his back, Christian trembles and is afraid. He clutches the Bible in his hand strongly for it is his guide to salvation. He opens the book and reads therein but yet cannot help weeping and trembling. In anguish he calls out, "What shall I do?" Another, in such a plight, would have given over to despair: Christian is of another mettle, he finds fortitude enough to overcome all obstacles, to pass by the straitest of gates , across the valley of Humiliation , to withstand the temptations of Vanity Fair, until at last he reaches the Celestial City. For all the Puritan's concern with metaphysics he was pragmatic in outlook. Conscious of his election and of being always under his great Taskmaster's vigilance, he exerted himself to the utmost. God's decree is unkowable and

immutable , it is true, but man may have an inkling that he has been chosen. As the tree is known by its fruit, so productive activity and evident holiness of life are signs of election. Did not Calvin himself affirm that vocation is the testimony of election? Did he not say that only the elect will have the vocation to lead a life of sanctity, even of austerity, dedicated to God and to his alloted task? Ceaseless effort was imperative, not to gain salvation but to prove that salvation has been won. The awareness of being chosen was a dynamic impulse: restless in mind and body the Puritan was not content merely 'to stand and wait'. To toil was God's punishment and command to sinful man, to toil fruitfully, a sign of God's benison.

Protestantism, with its free interpretation of Scripture and its direct relationship between man and God tends to foster diversity in religious expression. In England where dogmatic differences were less precise than those of the European reformists, the branching out into sects was greater - and most of them were Puritan-imbued. Puritanism runs, a sober and sturdy strand,in the arras of English history. It influenced politics, directed social life, inspired or restricted literature -besides shaping religious thought. If it gave a sober tinge to the English way

of life, it never did succeed - as Mr Hilaire Belloc- has observed- in destroying the English sense of humour. And wherever Englishment went to colonize on the wide face of the globe, they took Puritanism with them. The Puritan spirit, for good or for ill, lives on, as a groundswell that now and then ruffles still waters. In English America it has cropped up in different times, ways and places, as in the 'Blue Laws' of Anglican Virginia, the revivalism of Jonathan Edwards, or the Volstead Act...

Puritanism, in fine, not the modifications in religion the Tudors made, brought the greater, more significant and lasting change in the English mores - a re-shaping, a veritable Reformation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abram, A. — English Life and Manners in the Later Middle Ages
London, 1913

Anthology of Prose — Everyman's Library
London

Allen, J.W. — The History of Political Thought in the Sixteenth Century
London, 1951

Ashley, Maurice — England in the Seventeenth Century
Pelican Book, 1961

Belloc, Hilaire — Isabel de Inglaterra
Ed. Sudamericana, Buenos Aires, 1943

_____ — How the Reformation Happened
London, 1950

Bennett, H.S. — Chaucer and the Fifteenth Century
Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1958

Beesly, Edward S. — The Life of Queen Elizabeth
A.L. Burt & Co., New York, 1902

Bindoff, S.T. — Tudor England
Pelican Books

Bible	King James' Version of 1611 American Bible Society, New York
Book of Common Prayer	Modern Version, University Press, Oxford
Bonham-Carter, Victor	The English Village Pelican Books, 1952
Brook, V.J.K.	Whitgift and the English Church Macmillan Co., New York
Cambridge History of English Literature	Vol.2 The End of the Middle Ages Vol.3 Renascence and Reformation Vol.7 Cavalier and Puritan
Chaucer, Geoffrey	Canterbury Tales Troilus and Cressida Modern Library, New York, 1957
Churchill, Winston	A History of the English Speaking Peoples Vol. II 1958
Coulton, G.G.	Chaucer and His England London, 1921
_____	Medieval Panorama Meridian Books, New York, 1957
_____	The Medieval Scene Cambridge, England, 1930

Davis, H.W.C. — Book of History
Vol. X
Grolier Society, New York

Documents of the Christian Church
Ed. Bettenson, H.

Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire
The Lollard Conclusions (1394)
De Haeretico Comburendo (1401)
The Dispensations Act (1534)
The Supremacy Act of Henry VIII (1534)
The Royal Injunctions of Henry VIII (1536)
The Six Articles (1539)
Supremacy Act of Elizabeth (1559)
Act of Uniformity (1559)
Archbishop Parker's 'Advertisements' (1556)

Eliot, T.S. — Murder in the Cathedral
Faber and Faber

Durant, Will — The Reformation
Simon & Schuster, New York , 1957

Encyclopaedia Britannica Eleventh Edition, Cambridge University Press

(Principal Articles Consulted)

Alexander, Re. William L.	Calvin
Gairdner, James	Henry VIII
Garvie, Rev. Alfred E.	Predestination
Henderson, Thomas F.	Latimer
Henson, Rev. Herbert H.	Bible (English)
Hunt, Rev. William	Church of England
Lindsay, Thomas M.	Lollards
Pollard, Albert F.	Edward VI
	Henry VIII
	Cranmer
Phillips, Walter A.	Vestments
Poole, Reginald Lane	Wycliffe
Paues, Anna C. & Henson, Herbert	Bible
Robinson, James H.	Bible (New Testament)
Sanday, Rev. William	Bible New Testament
Stenning, John F.	Bible (Texts)
Turner, Cuthbert H.	Bible New Testaments)
Vinogradoff, Paul	Villenage
Warren, Fred. E.	Book of Common Prayer

Foxe, John	Book of Martyrs Protestant Truth Society, London
Froude, J.A.	Reign of Edward VI Everyman's Library
_____	Reign of Elizabeth Everyman's Library
_____	Reign of Mary Tudor Everyman's Library
Gems of Prose Ed. Mackay, Charles	Ancrene Riwle Routledge & Sons, London
Hackett, Francis	Henry VIII Garden City, New York, 1931
Hiuzinga, J.	The Waning of the Middle Ages Pelican Book
Irwin, Margaret	Elizabeth and the Prince of Spain Chatto & Windus, London, 1954
Jenkins, Elizabeth	Elizabeth the Great Permabook, New York, 1960
New International Encyclopaedia	Dodd, Mead & Co., New York
Oxford Companion to English Literature Ed. Harvey, Sir Paul	Univeristy Press, New York, 1942

Mather, Cotton — Magnalia Christi Americana
2 Vols. Silas Andrus & Son
Hartford , Conn., 1853

Merriman, R. Bigelow — Carlos V, el Emperador
Espasa Calpe, Argentina, 1940

Mitchell, R.J. &
Leys, M.D.R. — A History of the English People
Longmans Green & CO. , London, 1951

Macaulay, Lord — "The Country Gentry and the Clergy of the 17th Century"
England and the English
Longmans Green & CO. New York

Morison, Samuel Eliot — The Puritan Pronaos
New York University Press, 1936

Myers, A.R. — England in the Late Middle Ages
Penguin Books, 1953

Pevsner, Niklaus — "Architecture"
The Age of Chaucer
Pelican Book, 1959

Power, Eileen — Medieval People
Pelican Book, 1954

_____ _____ — Medieval English Nunneries

Prayer Books of Edward VI — Everyman's Library, 1946

Prescott, H.M.F. — Mary Tudor
Macmillan Co., New York, 1954

Routh, C.R.N.	They Saw It Happen (1485-1688) Macmillan, N.Y. 1957
San Agustín	La Ciudad de Dios Ed. Poblet, Buenos Aires
Sitwell, Edith	Fanfare for Elizabeth Macmillan, New York, 1946
Stenton, Doris Mary	English Society in the Early Middle Ages (1066-1307) Pelican Books, 1955
Strachey, Lytton	Elizabeth and Essex Blue Ribbon Books, New York, 1932
Stubbs, William	Constitutional History 3 Vols., Oxford, 1903
Taine, H.A.	History of English Literature Vol. III Edmonston and Douglas, Edinburgh.
Tappan, E.M.	England's Story H. Mifflin & Co., Cambridge Mass. 1901
Tawney, R.H.	Religion and the Rise of Capitalism Mentor Book, New York, 1952
Toynbee, Arnold	A Study of History Oxford University Press, 1951

Trevelyan, George M. — England in the Age of Wycliffe
Longamsn Green. London, 1925

_____ — English Social History
Longmans Green, Londonl 1947

_____ — History of England
Longmans Green, London, 1949

Waldman, Milton — Queen Elizabeth
Collins, London, 1953

Waugh, Evelyn — Thomas Campion
Image Book, New York, 1955

White, Rev. James — History of England
Routledge , Warne and Routledge

Willey, Basil — The Seventeenth Century Background
Chatto & Windus, London, 1942

Willison, George F. — Saints and Strangers
Reynal & Hitchcock, New York 1945