

I

Elizabeth I (r.1558-1603) came to the throne during a time of religious uncertainty. Her father, Henry VIII, had removed the English Church from papal authority during his rule. Edward VI, her brother, had taken that one step further and created a Calvinist State church in England. Then, Mary I, who was Elizabeth and Edward's older sister, had returned the English church to Catholicism. These drastic changes had left England in a state of religious instability, which Elizabeth needed to fix. In order to do this the queen would have to walk a fine line, what has been called the *via media*, or middle road. In this she was attempting to follow in the footsteps of her father, but one must ask, how successful was she really? Did Elizabeth I successfully walk the same tightrope her father had? It may seem that way on initial inspection, but when examined closely one discovers that the Elizabethan Church was in reality a Protestant Church dressed up in bishops' robes. This paper will argue that the doctrinal base of the Elizabethan Church, the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, provides ample support to this authors contention that the Elizabethan Church Settlement was not really a *via media*, the middle road, but one that was distinctly Protestant.

II

Historians have examined the Reformation of the English Church in a number of ways, which can be divided into four major schools of thought: rapid reform from the top-down, rapid reform from the bottom-up, slow reform from the top-down and slow reform from the bottom-up. While none of these schools fit all of the available

information, all give a different perspective of the progress of the Protestant movement in England.

Scholars who find rapid Protestant reform originating from the top argue that the monarchy was forcibly implicating the religious changes from the top, and then the reform movement quickly flowed down to the common parishioners. They state that Protestantism was quickly forced down through the levels of society to the common people by the priests, by the order of the queen, and that it was quickly accepted. The leading scholar who supports this idea is Geoffrey Elton who bases his argument on the idea that the Reformation was started by Thomas Cromwell. Cromwell carefully controlled the Reformation's political aspects in order to emphasize a "nationalized" church that supported the king and was free of magic and superstition. Cromwell used both printed propaganda and preaching to persuade the people to follow the new "nationalist" religion. This idea is supported by the findings from Peter Clark's study of Kent, which shows that Cromwell used the power of patronage to place the archbishop under enough pressure that the archbishop felt he had no choice but to convert to Protestantism. This in turn led to a breakthrough of Protestantism in the 1540s.¹

Another school of thought concerning the cause of Protestant reform in England is the concept of rapid reform from the bottom up. This grassroots reform movement has support from A.G. Dickens, as well as Claire Cross. Professor Dickens stresses the religious roots of this movement, rather than the political, as in the top-down reform. He

¹ Christopher Haigh, "The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation," in *Reformation to Revolution: Politics and Religion in Early Modern England*, ed. Margo Todd (London: Routledge, 1995), 15-16.

argues that Lollard evangelists² and their practice of Bible-reading conventicles laid the foundations for a grassroots expansion of Protestantism because these movements had very similar motivations. The bottom-up reform movement was further aided by the neglect of the Catholic clergy; the higher clergy were too involved with politics to pay attention to the movement and the lower were too poor and uneducated to effectively stop it. There is one significant problem with this school of thought, however. The heretics this concept is based upon are few and far between, and there could be a tendency of losing perspective if scholars focus in on this minority too much.

The third school of thought is one of slow reform from the top, that is, that the religious reforms started with the authority from the monarch and the bishops, but was slow to take hold in the parishes. Penry Williams argues that while the early Reformation movements may have affected the statute books, it was not until the Elizabethan movement, when official preaching and punishment were used effectively, that Catholicism was finally removed. A. L. Rowse views the Reformation in Cornwall, specifically, as a power struggle between the two religions, with the Protestant winners controlling the religious beliefs of a “mentally passive people.”³

Slow reform from the bottom up is a concept embraced by recent historians of Puritanism, including Patrick Collinson and Margaret Spufford. Collinson views the Elizabethan Reformation as more of the evangelical end of a political movement started

² Haigh, “Historiography,” 17. The Lollards were a Christian sect who followed the writings of John Wycliffe (mid 1320s-31 December 1384). They had no specific church doctrine or church leaders. They looked only to scripture for confirmation of their religious beliefs. They stressed a translation of the Bible into the vernacular strongly.

³ Ibid., 22.

under the reign of her father. He states that this was the phase where preachers carried the new beliefs to the parishes and developed communities of strongly committed Protestants. Spufford argues that while little opposition may be found in the early Reformation, there is little or no sign of Protestants in the parishes themselves until the 1590s.⁴

All of these reform concepts have flaws. Those that focus on rapid reform assume that the absence of documented Catholic rebellion under Protestant reign is a sign of acceptance, at the least, and perhaps even approval. Those that focus on slow reform make a similar mistake in assuming that the lack of significant Protestant rebellion during the reign of Mary I is a sign of the failure of early reforms to take proper hold of the countryside. The most likely sequence of events is one of a mixed occurrence of both reform from above and below, starting slowly in the countryside, and more quickly in urban areas, and all depending on the socio-political climate of the area being discussed. *A via media* of top-down and bottom-up schools of thought.

III

In 1558, the English nobles were uncertain what would become of their church system. It had gone from Roman Catholic to semi-Lutheran under Henry VIII. Henry had separated the English Church from the Pope and yet Henry was unwilling to change the doctrine and ritual of his church very much. Under Henry's son, Edward VI, the English Church became strongly Calvinist. Edward's reforms started off slowly, following his father's reforms, but rumors of further reform flew about the country and Edward lost

⁴ Ibid., 22-24

some of his control of the Reform movement. The pace at which changes occurred had to accelerate to keep up with the changes that ministers were calling their people to from their pulpits.⁵ While Edward believed that statues and paintings of a religious nature were wrong, he was not yet pushing for complete iconoclasm, yet paintings and statues of both religious and non-religious natures were being destroyed across the nation. Legislation could not keep up with the desired changes; while new legislation concerning the mass and chantries⁶ was being decided upon, the changes suggested in that legislation were being implemented.

However, while under Mary I's rule, the English Church swung back to an extremely conservative Catholicism. Initially she did not desire to force anyone to go to mass, only to give her citizens the option to go. However, it soon became obvious that a complete return to Catholicism was her intent. Mary's intentions were met with strong resistance, however, in the form of both outright acts of rebellion and in subversive activities. When Mary's chaplain, Gilbert Bourne, spoke out strongly against the activities of the former Bishop of London, Nicholas Ridley, and touted the new Bishop, Edmund Bonner, "the assembled crowd was so infuriated with his remarks that they broke into 'great uproar and shouting, like mad people,' and were on the point of rioting."⁷ Bourne was almost killed in this incident, and it took a protestant preacher to calm the crowd, because they would not listen to the Catholics anymore.

⁵ Chris Skidmore, *Edward VI: The Lost King of England* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2007), 70.

⁶ Chantries were endowments that had been set up in men's wills to ensure that masses would be sung for the salvation of their immortal souls after they had passed.

⁷ Carolly Erickson, *Bloody Mary* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1978), 310-12.

While this was the most violent, and most obvious, form of rebellion there were other more subtle ways as well. While the Protestant movement was in the minority, it was an active one. They had underground churches, with small groups of like-minded people meeting in secret, in cellars and attics. Protestants also committed acts of sabotage against the Catholic Church. One case in particular occurred during the spring of 1554. In London, Easter was being observed as Catholic tradition required, and the Host was left in a sepulchre on the altar on Good Friday, according to the tradition, and would remain there until Easter Sunday. However, when it came time to remove the Host from the tomb on Easter, it was not there. Someone had stolen it. The priest was forced to replace it with another, which led to a Protestant ballad relating this story, including how the papist's God had been stolen and replaced with a new one.⁸

In response to these signs of resistance, Mary increased the strictures and the strength of the punishment of heretics, effectively bringing the Inquisition of the Continent to England. She had heretics tortured into confession and burned at the stake, all of which has been documented in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, also known as *The Book of Martyrs*. Unfortunately *Acts and Monuments* has been proven incredibly biased, since Foxe was a radical Protestant who would have loved to see what was done to the Protestants done to the Catholics.⁹ It must be taken into account, however, that Mary only saw this as a temporary measure. She did not desire to punish heretics in these

⁸ Ibid., 397-98.

⁹ Skidmore, *Edward VI*, 94.

manners permanently, only until the heretics understood what they were doing, and were willing to repent and return to the “one true church.”

Elizabeth had always carefully, and publicly, followed the religious requirements of the country, regardless of whether they were Catholic or Protestant. No one was sure what Elizabeth would do, because no one was quite positive about her personal beliefs. Under Edward she had followed the Protestant practices as required by law, but she had also followed the Catholic practices under Mary as well, and had worked hard to keep her personal beliefs private for her entire adult life. She had the daunting task of attempting to satisfy all of the religious stances in her country, which ranged from extreme Catholicism on the far right to radical Puritanism on the far left.

IV

The Elizabethan Religious settlement was a necessary part of Elizabeth’s success as a monarch. Because of the religious beliefs of her siblings, the realm was a very religiously unstable place, and Elizabeth had to find ways to appease both the Edwardian Protestants and the Marian Catholics. Elizabeth could have done one of three things to solve this dilemma. The first was by maintaining the Marian policy of Catholicism. This had some benefits, but also some drawbacks. By maintaining Catholicism Elizabeth knew she would have Spain as an ally. She would not have had to worry about any of the Catholic countries attacking England strictly because she was no longer under the pope’s protection, which she would have had to worry about if she chose to return England to being a Protestant state as it had been under Edward. However, by remaining under the Catholic Church, Elizabeth would have to allow

another sovereign authority, that of the pope, into her realm. She would also have had to pay him taxes, in the form of tithes, out of the money that she could have for herself otherwise.

Elizabeth's second option was to return England to the Protestantism it had known during the reign of Edward VI. As mentioned above, with this option she would have had to worry about Catholic uprising in her country and attacks from France and Spain, the two Catholic superpowers of the day. She would not have had to worry about another sovereign within England trying to usurp power, but would also have lost some of the divinely given sovereignty acknowledged by the pope that all monarchs relied upon so heavily during her lifetime and before.

Her third option was not one most people thought of. Elizabeth decided to take the Church of England back to the Church her father, Henry VIII, had started, or at least a church resembling one from the Henrician period. This is what historians have called the *via media*, or the middle road. Instead of choosing a side in this religious argument Elizabeth chose to walk right down the middle of the two. She took the hierarchy and structure of the Catholic Church and combined it with the milder of Protestant ideas, and had them preached in English

In order to achieve this, Elizabeth went through Parliament. This was in order to ensure that her church settlement was lawful and legitimate in the eyes of the English people. She first passed an Act of Supremacy in 1559, which removed the English

Church from papal authority, undoing Mary's work. The obdurate and remonstrating bishops were imprisoned to prevent them from casting their opposing votes.¹⁰

Elizabeth also assumed the title of "Supreme Governor of the Church," as opposed to "Supreme Head," which had been the title her father and brother had taken, as a concession to the more conservative members of Parliament. This was necessary because she was a woman, and thus she could not be the leader of the Church, even though she was the monarch. Parliament would not have allowed Elizabeth to become the Supreme Head for this reason, and Elizabeth needed that control over the Church in order to exact the changes she wanted to. She also did not force the laity to take an oath of allegiance to the Supreme Governor, only the Church and Government officials, because she did not want to force her people to choose between their Queen and their religion.

The next act she passed was the Act of Uniformity, which required that all Englishmen attended church on Sundays and all holy days. These church services were to follow a revised version of the Book of Common Prayer that had been used during the reign of Edward VI, Elizabeth's brother, and was written by the same man who had written the *Forty-two Articles*, Thomas Cranmer. The revised prayer book was an amalgamation of the Prayer Books of 1549 and 1552. It altered the words spoken during the mass to emphasize the act of remembering Christ's sacrifices as opposed the superstition of transubstantiation,¹¹ and stated that one could "feed on him in thy heart by

¹⁰ John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 327.

¹¹ Transubstantiation is the belief that, when the priest lifts the Host up and speaks the liturgy which coincides with the lifting, the priest is able, with the power of the Holy Spirit, to turn the wine and the bread to the blood and body of Christ.

faith, with thanksgiving.”¹² This allowed those who depended on the mass to feel the presence of Christ the ability to continue doing so. The reason this is an important change is because it removed mystery from the mass, and took the power the priest held over the parishioners, by being able to turn simple bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, away from him.

Finally Elizabeth had the Thirty-Nine Articles passed by the Convocation, which were essentially Protestant, with some well-placed ambiguity in places which may have otherwise completely denounced certain Catholic beliefs, such as transubstantiation. For while transubstantiation was denounced it was replaced with another, equally fulfilling, ritual. These ambiguities created a legitimate way for both the laity and the clergy to maintain a more Catholic line of thinking about some things.

The sect that gave Elizabeth and her reform plan the most difficulty was the Puritans. This sect was a group of radical Protestants who were determined to purify the Church. They wished to eliminate the superstitions of the Catholic Church and bring the church back to the primitive form of the apostolic church, following only the Scriptures. They challenged Elizabeth’s Church reforms, stating that there was too much ritual and superstition in the reform.¹³ In order to deal with the Puritans, Elizabeth first tried compromise, giving them Scriptural purity in the Thirty-Nine Articles while maintaining the Catholic structure, but the Puritans stayed true to their name and desire to purify the Church of all things non-Scriptural. Then, after Archbishop Edmund Grindal died in

¹² Guy, *Tudor England*, 261.

¹³ *Ibid*, 304.

1583, after a long suspension, Elizabeth appointed a Protestant who was an anti-Puritan, John Whitgift, who dealt with the Puritans with an iron fist, persecuting the Clergy who refused to conform to the English Church.

Dealing with the Catholics was a trickier task than dealing with the Puritans. Elizabeth needed to be able to keep the Catholics in check, but also could not afford to offend the Catholic superpowers that were France and Spain. She allowed them to secretly follow Catholic tradition, and never forced any of the laity to vow to follow her religion. However, the Pope, in 1566, did force the English Catholics to choose between England and the Catholic Church, and most chose England. This solved part of Elizabeth's problem, because the Pope now considered most of her Catholic followers Protestant. However, Elizabeth still had to walk a tightrope of religions, because if she leaned too far toward the Protestant and Puritan side, the Catholic countries which surrounded her, France and Spain, would attack her and attempt to convert her and her people back to Catholicism by force.

V

When examining whether Elizabeth's Church was truly the middle road, one must look at the way Elizabeth herself worshipped. She had been raised in a decidedly Protestant environment, learning from the Protestant tutors who had been provided for her brother. In fact, in her biography, Alison Plowden states that Elizabeth was "[v]ery much a child—if not, in fact, *the* child—of the English reformation."¹⁴ At the beginning

¹⁴ Alison Plowden, *Elizabeth I* (Great Britain: Sutton Publishing, 2004), 62. While sharing tutors with Edward, Elizabeth was taught by such progressive men as Sir John Cheke, Roger Ascham, Anthony Cooke, and William Grindal, all of whom came from Cambridge at the request of her stepmother Queen Katherine Parr.

of her reign Elizabeth took a decidedly Protestant stance in her personal life. Indeed, as her famous American biographer has it, “the Queen was a convinced Protestant.”¹⁵ She left the church when the priest lifted the host against her wishes and she did not go to mass.¹⁶ She spent 4 months translating Marguerite of Navarre’s *Mirror of a Sinful Soul*, a manuscript with Protestant leanings, in 1544.¹⁷ At Elizabeth’s coronation there was no Elevation of the Host, which was against Catholic tradition. Her first parliament was told to “consider the ‘well making of laws the for the according and uniting of the people of this realm into a uniform order of religion,’”¹⁸ which demonstrates Elizabeth’s intent to introduce a common Prayer Book and the Act of Uniformity. Yet some historians hold that she was a moderate, with good cause. She rejected the pope, but desired to keep the vestments, and did keep the crucifix and candles in the royal chapel, because she enjoyed the traditional presentation.¹⁹ She also had a love for the music and artwork of the Catholic Church, and did not follow the belief that they were idolatrous practices.²⁰

However, even with her Protestant personal beliefs, Elizabeth was hesitant to take England as a country to that extreme. To do so would mean excommunication, leaving her country open to attacks from Catholic countries eager to take over England and return it to the “true faith.” According to Christopher Haigh, she decided to make the changes

¹⁵ Wallace MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I* (London: Edward Arnold, 1993), 49.

¹⁶ Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (London: Longman Group, 1998), 29.

¹⁷ Guy, *Tudor England*, 300.

¹⁸ Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and Religion 1558-1603*. (London: Routledge, 1994), 7.

¹⁹ Guy, *Tudor England*, 252.

²⁰ Elizabeth loved ceremonials that she believed was as sacred as a religious ritual as it was in respect of courtly ceremonies. See Fiona Kisby, “When the King Goeth a Procession: Chapel Ceremonies and Services the Ritual Year and Religious Reforms at the Early Tudor Court.” Cited in David Starkey, *Elizabeth* (London: Vintage, 2000), 300.

necessary to take England from a Catholic country to a Protestant one, because she had started her reign promising change. To do this she would have to change laws, remove all of the Catholic bishops and councilors of her sister's reign, and put Protestant men in those places. This transition did not go as smoothly as she would have hoped, however. Even though she desired to reign in a Protestant country, there were men in power who disagreed. There were members of the House of Lords who firmly believed that the Catholic Church was the only true church, and they fought the Reformation Bill in 1559. This bill served two purposes: to restore royal supremacy and to restore the Protestant church services that had been in practice during the reign of Edward VI. It had passed in the House of Commons with little trouble, but the Lords would not allow the bill to pass as it stood. When the Lords were done with the bill all it stated was that Elizabeth could claim supremacy if she wished to. The Catholic Lords and bishops could have, on their own, blocked even this bill, but, through a bit of trickery and luck, the Protestants were able to pass the Reformation Bill.

Haigh believes that this event, and others like it, was the cause of Elizabeth's sudden change in religious policy. Instead of using blatantly Protestant language, she now was practicing restraint. She changed the language in her Prayer Book, and the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, to be less offensive to her more conservative noble class, and yet still had trouble pushing the bills through Parliament. Unfortunately, these changes were not enough to satisfy her even more conservative rural subjects. She faced strong opposition from the commoners. They refused to follow the church guidelines that had been approved by Parliament, because they were too radical. Elizabeth found it

necessary to remove even more of the Protestant language from the Prayer Book and the liturgy, in order to keep the peace in her country.²¹

The Thirty-Nine Articles demonstrate Elizabeth's desire for moderation. They were crafted from the Forty-two articles, which were written by Thomas Cranmer during the reign of Edward VI. When used in conjunction with the Elizabethan Prayer Book, also based upon the one written by Cranmer, one has what has been called the *via media*. This is achieved by an outward appearance of Catholicism, with a Protestant doctrine. The English Church kept, for a large part, the trappings of any good Catholic country. They used a prayer book, which was similar to the books used to structure Catholic Masses, but it differed in content and did not have the approval of the pope. Rather, this book was based completely on the Prayer Book of 1552, which had been written in its entirety by Thomas Cranmer, who had been burned at the stake during the reign of Mary I. The ministers wore vestments similar to those of the Catholic Church. Artwork and choral work were permitted, and even encouraged, by the new Queen, because these were things about the Catholic Church that she enjoyed most.

Specific doctrine in the Articles demonstrates a distinctive Protestant tendency. For example, Article VIII states that the Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed, and the Apostle's Creed should be believed because they have a basis in Scripture.²² There is

²¹ Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 29-32.

²² The Nicene Creed is the basis for the Catholic and English Churches. It establishes the basic beliefs in God, Christ's resurrection, and the need for one universal church. Athanasius's Creed states that the Church worships the Trinity, that is God as three in one. The Apostles' Creed reaffirms the Nicene Creed, accentuating the beliefs of the Trinity, that Christ went to hell to conquer death, and rose from the dead on the third day.

also the very distinct presence of the denial of the pope, or the Bishop of Rome, as he is called in the Articles. In Article XXXVII it clearly states “The Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England” which speaks plainly for itself.²³ Instead, the Church of England is under the control of the Queen of England. Article XVII discusses Predestination, the very Calvinist concept that all true believers have already been chosen for salvation, and that nothing within human power can be done to cause oneself to be chosen. This goes directly against the central Catholic concept of salvation through works.

There were ambiguities written into the Book of Common Prayer concerning, not doctrinal, but ceremonial requirements, such as the wearing of vestments and the presence of the Crucifix and candles on the altar. This kept many of the more moderate dissenters, on either side, happy, but only served to anger the small, but vocal extreme groups. This could be because the places where ambiguity was inserted were not critical to the English church doctrine, but were of critical importance to the Catholic Church. This gave the English Church the appearance of acquiescing to Catholic demands, and the appearance of a possible conversion, without actually making any real theological changes to the church.

Ironically enough, however, it was not the Catholics who were most upset about these aspects of compromise, but the radical Protestants, those called Puritans. They believed that the changes were, not only unnecessary, but also dangerous for the souls of

²³ Cited *in extenso* in Stuart E. Prall, *Church and State in Tudor and Stuart England* (Arlington Heights: Harland Davidson, Inc., 1993), 79.

the English people. These changes were not directly based on Scripture, and were thus not above reproach. Many Puritans believed that matters not addressed in Scripture should be treated with great caution, because men were liable to make mistakes, and the Anti-Christ could use those openings to corrupt the Church.²⁴

Under the façade of pseudo-Catholicism lay a decidedly Protestant Church, albeit one with conservative leanings. According to the Thirty Nine Articles, Elizabeth's church was barely less Protestant than the church of Edward VI, which makes sense, since the founding documents of both churches are the same, with Elizabeth removing three of the most blatantly Protestant articles as part of her moderation. And yet, one finds that there is no attempt to hide the Protestant nature of the Articles. Article XXII denies the existence of Purgatory, which is a critical aspect of the Catholic afterlife. If at this point there was any doubt about the religious orientation of the English Church, it is made abundantly clear in Article XXV, which states that there are only two Sacraments that need to be followed, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. It continues to state that the five extra Sacraments that the Catholic Church requires have no basis in Scripture as Sacraments, and, while they are parts of life allowed by the Scriptures, should not be considered equal with the Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Patrick Collinson makes the argument that the English Church under Elizabeth was completely Protestant, but that requiring the common Englishman to strictly follow the English church doctrine set forth in the Prayer Book was not strongly enforced. He was unclear as to whether this was because Elizabeth could not control the grassroots

²⁴ Doran, *Elizabeth and Religion*, 25-27.

movement, or because Elizabeth chose not to enforce it.²⁵ He argues that there were many different sects of Protestantism straining at the restrictions caused by the English Church, that the majority were looking for more than what the Church was already providing.²⁶ He stated that the point of the English Church was not to discover what individuals religious beliefs were,²⁷ but a means of unifying the country under the Queen and developing a sense of national identity through religion.²⁸ His theory is sound, especially when looking specifically at the *Thirty Nine Articles*, but he neglects to take into account the veneer of a Catholic-like Church, which gave many commoners comfort, knowing that they could depend on the Church to care for their immortal souls, just like they always had.

Susan Doran argues that the Elizabethan Church was a sort of middle road, in between Protestantism and Catholicism. It had the theology of the Protestant Churches, but the discipline of the Catholics. She, however, states that this was not necessarily the result of careful planning, but was more or less an accident. Elizabeth and her bishops were often at loggerheads over doctrine, and as a result of the political decisions of this conflict the Elizabethan Church found itself in between the two religions.²⁹

John Guy states that in the Elizabethan Church Settlement Elizabeth had no control. All she wanted to enforce was “Anglicanism,” which Guy defines as adherence

²⁵ Patrick Collinson, “The Elizabethan Church and the New Religion,” in *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. Christopher Haigh (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 178.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 191.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 178.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 174.

²⁹ Doran, *Elizabeth I and Religion*, 20-21.

to the Prayer Book and the national church, as opposed to the singing of psalms those with “‘godly’ zeal” participated in.³⁰ He goes on to say that, although Elizabeth played her part by passing the religious Acts and Articles, there was already a grassroots reformation in progress, and had been for some time.³¹ He cites the Lollards as proof of this reformation at the bottom of the class ladder. However, this outlook is not one that receives much favor in the historical community. There does not seem to be enough evidence to fully support his ideas.

Haigh’s biography of the queen states that, she was a Protestant, she was also a realist. While she adopted a Protestant persona, for the most part, her country did not. She and her advisors believed that it was too dangerous for England to be left vulnerable to attack by true Catholic countries.³² However, if there were hope for English conversion from within, then England would be safe from attack from the outside. Haigh also states that Elizabeth feared the Catholics on the inside, and it was for this reason that she fought so hard to keep England on the conservative end of Protestantism. This fear unfortunately led to the alienation of the more radical Protestants, and, in the end, caused many of the difficulties that arose in Elizabeth’s Church Settlement. Haigh agrees with Collinson that the grassroots reform grew out of Elizabeth’s control, to some extent. He goes on to state that Elizabeth would have rather had “honest, sober, and wise men, and such as can read the scriptures and the homilies well unto the people,”³³ than educated

³⁰ Guy, *Tudor England*, 302.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 307.

³² Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 32-33, 46.

³³ *Ibid.*, 44.

men who may start writing their own sermons. The research seems to support Haigh's theories concerning Elizabeth's actions for the Church. However, he fails to clearly explain why exactly Elizabeth fears the Catholics within her own country, so many of whom chose her over the pope.

Elizabeth I's Church Reform was a complicated affair. As has already been mentioned earlier, because of the religious climate in the country, when Elizabeth took the throne she had to be cautious and circumspect while restoring her father's church. But she was no passive revivalist. She created a completely new type of church, mixing Protestant theology with Catholic structure, and while her policy may have technically called for a completely Protestant nation, she was not one to "make windows into men's hearts and secret thoughts."³⁴ Stuart Prall is near the mark when he observes: "The nature of the Elizabethan church (the *via media*) can be summed up by saying that the outward signs, the clerical hierarchy and the Prayer Book, were Catholic, whereas the inward part, the doctrine was Protestant."³⁵ Even though she may not have walked that perfect middle path, like she said she would, she was still able to create a balance for her nation.

³⁴ Ibid., 42.

³⁵ Prall, *Church and State*, 81.

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