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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ  
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CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE  
AND THE  
ANTI-CATHOLIC CLIMATE OF ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

By

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Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
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## ABSTRACT

The usual interpretations of Marlowe's plays as the anti-religious expressions of an atheistic or agnostic mind in rebellion against religious orthodoxy must be modified to take into account the fact that Marlowe, in almost all of his plays, exhibits a prejudice against Roman Catholicism which is part of the Protestant orthodoxy of Tudor England. Marlowe's upbringing and education were such as to lead one to expect that he would have shared many of the prejudices and commonly-held opinions of his time. In Canterbury and at Cambridge, he must have been taught, both through precept and example, to hate and fear the Church of Rome.

Based on firm political, as well as theological, foundations, Tudor prejudice against the Roman Catholic Church was manifested in the many laws which were passed, especially after the Pope's excommunication of Queen Elizabeth, aimed at restricting the activities of Roman Catholics, limiting their rights as citizens and discouraging them from the practice of their religion. Many published writings, including books, pamphlets and ballads, expounded and supported the government's anti-papal policies; the production of many of these publications, moreover, may have been instigated at the behest of noble


patrons or highly-placed prelates.

One area in which a long tradition existed of ~~spreading~~ the Protestant gospel, while at the same time denouncing and attacking the Church of Rome, was the theatre, where, from the time of Henry VIII to that of Elizabeth I, except during the reign of Queen Mary, Protestant drama flourished. At first, Protestant polemics in the theatre took the form of explicitly moralistic plays such as those of John Bale. Gradually, however, as the Protestant Church became more firmly established during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the theatre lost its purely propagandistic character, except for a few isolated instances of late moralistic or purely polemical drama. Yet the Elizabethan stage maintained the traditions of presenting Roman Catholics as conventional villains and of mocking Catholic beliefs and practices.

Christopher Marlowe partook of this anti-Catholic theatrical tradition, depicting Catholics as villains in Tamburlaine, part two, The Massacre at Paris and The Jew of Malta, and exploiting anti-Catholic sentiment as a means of creating sympathy for the protagonists of Edward the Second and Doctor Faustus. The recognition of the fact of Marlowe's anti-Catholicism in his plays makes it necessary for us to reevaluate these dramas and to see them as much more orthodox, at least in the outward

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appearances that they presented to Marlowe's contemporary audiences, than it has been customary to regard them.



## PREFACE

In the pages which follow, I have attempted neither to bring forth any new information about Christopher Marlowe's life nor to offer any radical new interpretations of his plays, but to emphasize well-known facts about his life and aspects of his plays which have hitherto been neglected by students of this most mysterious of Elizabethan playwrights.

It is strange that Marlowe, whose life and private opinions have been so well documented, should be as shadowy a figure as he is, and that in the last hundred years so much controversy should have centered around his mind and personality. After all, we know far more facts about Marlowe, from his university record, his legal entanglements and the public documents relating to his death, than we do about almost any other Elizabethan playwright, many of whose names exist today solely with relation to the plays that they wrote. Moreover, we have records of the scandalous opinions that Marlowe seems frequently to have expressed in private; aside from Ben Jonson, whose private pronouncements on literary topics were recorded by William Drummond, we have no records of the private conversations of any other major playwright of the period. Yet all the reports of his private statements seem to make Marlowe a

more mysterious and more fascinating historical figure than any other<sup>3</sup> comparable writer of the Elizabethan age, with the sole exception of Shakespeare.

It is this air of a fascinating mystery that has made Marlowe such an attractive literary figure in our own time. Marlowe himself, apart from the characters that he created in his plays, appeals to the modern age as a picaresque figure, suggestive of the romantic rebels whose writings, attitudes and poses have been so influential in the formation of the modern sensibility: among French writers Marlowe seems to fit in with such rebels as Sade, Baudelaire, Lautréamont, Rimbaud, and Genet; among English and American authors, he seems to have an affinity with such stormy figures as Matthew Lewis, Beddoes, Blake, Byron, Poe, Swinburne, Wilde, and "Baron Corvo." Like all of these writers, Marlowe seems to the modern world to be a narcissist, brooding over some inner wound, a misfit in civilized society, a rebel against authority, a ranting rationalist who scoffs at religion, decency and respectability, and a man obsessed with the notion of evil as a powerful force.

This romantic view of Marlowe, whose roots I discuss in Chapter Five, has led to some misconceptions about Marlowe's plays and, indeed, about his life. A mythical Marlowe has sprung up which tends to overshadow

the real Marlowe and sometimes to distort the playwright's works and his true achievements in them. In writing this thesis, I have tried to dispel some of these misconceptions by showing that, however much Marlowe may seem to fit into the modern romantic image of the poète maudit, yet he is essentially a man of his own age and must be read as such if we are to experience his plays as he evidently intended his audience to do.

My references to the author's intention, of course, may provoke the objection that an author's intention is irrelevant to the ultimate effect that a literary work has on its audience. Although this may be true in some instances, in the works to which I refer below, the authors' intentions are quite important because many of the works to be discussed were written purely as propaganda. It would be difficult, I think, to react in any strong way to a reading or a stage performance of, say, John Bale's King Johan if one did not first take into account the historical period in which the play was written, the surrounding political and religious controversies in which the play took part and Bale's own responses to these controversies as he embodied them in his play. In taking all of these things into consideration, one is forced, because of the controversial nature of the basic material, to speak of Bale's intention, that is, his purpose in writing the play,

which was to express the political and theological position which he and his party were holding up as the solution to the nation's troubles.

Now although Christopher Marlowe is not primarily thought of as a propagandist today, he wrote one indisputably propagandistic play, The Massacre at Paris, and he can be shown to partake of a tradition of exploiting the theatre as a means of propagating "official" opinions regarding both religion and politics; it is Marlowe's place in this tradition that I have tried to establish here. After examining the facts of Marlowe's life, emphasizing the traditional aspects of his upbringing and education, I have taken one of the orthodox commonplaces of Tudor thought, the dangers of Roman Catholicism as a tyrannical political force and as a persecuting religion, and have tried to demonstrate, first, how it influenced the making and enforcing of laws in Tudor England and how it became a common theme in the non-dramatic writings of the period. Next, I have tried to establish as a fact that there was a continuous tradition of anti-Catholic drama which began during the time of Henry VIII and endured into and beyond the time of Queen Elizabeth I, and was interrupted briefly only during the short reign of Queen Mary. Next, I have shown examples of Marlowe's exploitation of the anti-Catholic theme in

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his own plays. Finally, I have attempted to suggest some  
of the ways in which the fact of Marlowe's having taken  
an orthodox stand on at least one important religious  
issue of his time may influence our understanding of his  
plays.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of institutions and individuals have aided me in the course of my research. I would like to thank the University of Ottawa Library, particularly for the use of its numerous microfilms and its extensive collection of Tudor and Stuart drama. I wish to thank the reference librarians at Algonquin College, Ottawa, for their unflinching assistance in locating hard-to-find books and arranging for inter-library loans. I am deeply indebted to the Rev. Richard Sturtz, head librarian at Wadhams Hall College, Ogdensburg, N.Y., for allowing me unlimited access to his library's very considerable resources. I must also thank President Laurent Isabelle, Lionel Poirier, Dean of Applied Arts, and Donald T. Francis, Chairman of the Department of English, all of Algonquin College, for granting me a sabbatical year, without which I might have been unable to complete this thesis. Among those who have given me more personal aid and attention, first thanks must go to Dr. Richard N. Pollard, who directed my research and guided me through the most complex problems of my work. Dr. Hazel M. Batzer (Pollard) also deserves much gratitude for having guided me, both in her classes and in the earliest stages of my research, for having read some of the preliminary drafts of my thesis and, especially, for having helped me,

through her probing questioning, to avoid many errors and inconsistencies in my thinking. I am also grateful to Mrs. Margery Toner for having typed a difficult manuscript. Finally, and foremost, I wish to thank my wife, to whom this thesis is dedicated, for the extensive discussions in which she took part with me, for her many helpful questions and comments at every stage of my research, for reading every draft of my thesis and for making countless suggestions for changes, improvements and clarifications.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT OF MARLOWE'S YOUTH

About 1537, Thomas Wylley, a clergyman and occasional playwright, complained to Thomas Cromwell of unfavorable response to one of his plays. "The most part of the priests of Suffolk," he wrote, "will not receive me ever since I made a play against the Pope's councillors, Error, Colle Clogger of Conscience, and Incredulity, that an the Act of Parliament had not followed after, I had been considered a great liar."<sup>1</sup>

A few years later, about 1542, "A certain Moryson" suggested to the king that the government should sponsor an annual "memorial of the destruction of the Bishop of Rome, similar to the celebration of the victory of Agincourt at Calais, and the destruction of the Danes at Hocktide." Moryson's opinion was that "the plays of Robin Hood and Maid Marion should be forbidden and others devised to set forth and declare lively before the people's eyes the abomination and wickedness of the Bishop of Rome, monks, friars, nuns and

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<sup>1</sup>Robert W. Bolwell, The Life and Works of John Heywood, (New York, 1966), p. 121. Bolwell is here quoting from Brewer's edition of Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII (1862).

such like and to declare the obedience due to the king."<sup>2</sup>

These statements demonstrate an aspect of Elizabethan drama not often considered by critics and literary historians, namely, the intimate connection between the theatre and government policy in sixteenth century England, and particularly the role of the drama as a powerful weapon of propaganda in implementing the Tudor government's policy of eradicating the influence of the Church of Rome.<sup>3</sup> For Tudor drama throughout the century, except during Queen Mary's reign, reflected the official government policy of repression and ridicule of Roman Catholic persons, institutions, beliefs, traditions and practices.<sup>4</sup>

Not every play written during the long and complex reign of the Tudor dynasty can be called controversial; but a great many of them, even those which, on casual reading, seem to have no serious message to convey, can be shown,

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<sup>2</sup>Bolwell, The Life and Works of John Heywood, p. 122. Again, Bolwell is quoting Brewer, p. 244.

<sup>3</sup>A few major studies of this subject have appeared, notably the following: Rainer Pineas, Tudor and Early Stuart Anti-Catholic Drama (Nieuwkoop, The Netherlands, 1972); David Bevington, Tudor Drama and Politics (Cambridge, Mass., 1968); and Eleanor Rosenberg, Leicester, Patron of Letters (New York, 1955). Although Rosenberg's book contains little material directly relevant to the study of drama, it is the best exposition of the patronage system in Elizabethan England.

<sup>4</sup>During the reign of Queen Mary, more or less the same policy continued, except that the state religion was Roman Catholicism and the oppressed people were the Protestants. Surprisingly, only one truly anti-Protestant drama survives from this reign, N. Udall's Respublica (ca. 1553). Any other such plays were probably suppressed during Queen Elizabeth's time.

upon close examination, to contain at least some controversial, satiric or derisive material relative to the Protestant-Catholic conflict that was such an important part of Tudor politics. Certainly every major playwright at some time in his career made use of contemporary religious and sectarian disputes in his plays, even those playwrights who today seem to be the least "involved" in such controversies.

Surprising as it may seem in the light of much that has been written and spoken about him, Christopher Marlowe, as much as any other playwright of his time, used current religious controversy as raw material for his plays. The common view of Marlowe as atheist and rebel against all forms of authority and all institutions has perhaps led many students to the mistaken belief that Marlowe was in no way interested in the struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism.<sup>5</sup> But, as we shall see, the evidence of his interest is to be found in all but one of his plays.

Marlowe's unorthodox religious opinions, whether or not he may rightly be termed an atheist, serve only to complicate our understanding of his plays, rather than

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<sup>5</sup>The view of Marlowe as atheist may be seen in the following works, among others: U. M. Ellis-Fermor, Christopher Marlowe (Hamden, Conn., 1967); John Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, The Man in His Time (New York, 1964); Robert E. Knoll, Christopher Marlowe (New York, 1969); A. L. Rowse, Christopher Marlowe (London, 1964).

simplify it. We must accept much of what has been written about Marlowe's rebellion against traditional Christianity, but we must also examine that which is orthodox and traditional in his treatment of religious themes and subjects in his plays. By doing so, we may see how plays, which today are accepted as the poetic statements of a man in rebellion against orthodoxy, could have been readily accepted on the stage and in print in a period when there was strict censorship of stage presentations and, to a somewhat lesser degree, when there were restrictions on what could be allowed in print.<sup>6</sup>

In short, rather than looking at what made Marlowe different from his fellow playwrights, I hope to examine those elements in his plays in which he can rightly be said to be similar to the other dramatists of his day. In examining Marlowe's treatment of the contention between the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches, especially in the light of other playwrights' treatment of similar materials, we may discover one of the links connecting the young Marlowe -- an intelligent but otherwise ordinary enough young man from Canterbury, a scholarship student at Cambridge, a candidate for the ministry of

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<sup>6</sup>For an account of the censorship of Tudor drama, both in the theatre and in the press, see E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1923), I, 269-307; III, 158-177.

the Church of England -- with the older Marlowe -- the alleged Machiavellian, atheist, sodomite, counterfeiter and traitor, who also happened to be a great poet and playwright. How the transition from the one to the other was accomplished will probably always remain a mystery. But one of the principal links uniting the younger and the older Marlowe is what might be called the Tudor Protestant attitude toward the Church of Rome, an attitude which he shared with most Englishmen of his time. This Tudor Protestant attitude may be defined as the collection of social and political opinions growing out of the split between the Christian churches of the sixteenth century. This attitude was inculcated by the government of England in order to strengthen and protect the English crown and church, and it resulted in the fostering of a great deal of contempt for and prejudice against the Roman Catholic people and their institutions. As we shall see, political action was taken against individual English Catholics, and authors were openly encouraged to produce works which would advance and reinforce anti-Catholic prejudice in England.

Whether this attitude, which Marlowe seems to have shared, became in his later life a mere pose designed to conceal the playwright's true feelings about religion is a debatable question. However, a brief survey of the familiar facts of Marlowe's life up to the time he commenced his literary career in London shows that at all

times Marlowe lived in an environment that was distinctively Protestant and that, by virtue of his background and education, Marlowe would probably have absorbed most of the common religious attitudes of the orthodox Elizabethan Protestant.

Canterbury, Marlowe's birthplace, was the center of the English Church.<sup>7</sup> This being so, religion must have been more prominent there than elsewhere in England because a greater percentage of the population must have depended for their livelihoods on the Church of England's administrative personnel. Needless to say, in Marlowe's time Canterbury was firmly Protestant. But even during the reign of Queen Mary, there seem to have been some people there who refused to waver in their Protestant faith. For, in 1557, as John Bakeless shows, a play staged in Canterbury, "probably," says Bakeless, "a Protestant dramatic outburst against the Catholic government," had to be suppressed by Mary's Privy Council and the Canterbury "city fathers" on the ground of sedition.<sup>8</sup>

Canterbury was notable during Marlowe's youth as one of the principal refuges for Continental European Protestants who had fled from religious persecutions in

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<sup>7</sup>William Urry, "Foreword" to A. D. Wraight and Virginia Stern's In Search of Christopher Marlowe (New York, 1965), p.v.

<sup>8</sup>John Bakeless, The Tragical History of Christopher Marlowe (Hamden, Conn., 1964), I, 32.

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their homelands; prominent among these were the Walloons, fleeing from the Netherlands because of the anti-Protestant policies of Philip II of Spain, and the Huguenots, fleeing from the similar policies of the Duc de Guise and the French monarchy.<sup>9</sup> As G. Elmore Reaman shows, Henry VIII had established a policy of welcoming to England Protestant victims of Catholic persecution.<sup>10</sup> Edward VI continued his father's policy in this regard; during his reign special churches were set aside for the particular use of foreign Protestants in London, Norwich, Southampton and Canterbury.<sup>11</sup> During Mary's reign, foreign and domestic Protestants were alike persecuted as heretics in England; but when Elizabeth I achieved the throne, she revived her father's policy of encouraging the immigration to England of European victims of Catholic persecution.<sup>12</sup> As Samuel Smiles points out, Elizabeth remained steadfast in her defense of these immigrants, even against the demands of the Spanish and French kings and of the Pope himself that

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<sup>9</sup>The full story of this migration is to be found in Samuel Smiles, The Huguenots, Their Settlements, Churches, and Industries in England and Ireland (London, 1867). Hereafter, this work will be cited as Smiles, The Huguenots. See also G. Elmore Reaman, The Trail of the Huguenots in Europe, the United States, South Africa and Canada (Baltimore, 1966), for further information. Hereafter, this work will be referred to as Reaman, The Trail of The Huguenots.

<sup>10</sup>Reaman, The Trail of the Huguenots, p. 70.

<sup>11</sup>Reaman, The Trail of the Huguenots, p. 78.

<sup>12</sup>Reaman, The Trail of the Huguenots, p. 70.

these refugee Protestants should be expelled from her realm.<sup>13</sup>

It should be noted in passing that the Tudor policy toward Protestant immigration was by no means entirely based on motives of religious idealism. At a time when England's political relations with her nearest neighbors were strained, and trade and commerce were subject to the irregular fluctuations of the international political situation, there were practical commercial advantages in welcoming these immigrants, a great percentage of whom, as Reaman and Smiles agree, were skilled artisans who planned to carry on their trades in England.<sup>14</sup>

According to Samuel Smiles, a particularly large number of European Protestants, first Walloons and later Huguenots, settled in Canterbury with official permission to practice their trades within the precincts of the city.<sup>15</sup> According to Smiles, Matthew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, "with the sanction of the Queen, granted to the exiles the free use of the Under Croft of the Cathedral, where 'the gentle and profitable strangers,'

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<sup>13</sup>Smiles, The Huguenots, pp. 79-80.

<sup>14</sup>Reaman, The Trail of the Huguenots, p. 70; Smiles, The Huguenots, pp. 143-44.

<sup>15</sup>Smiles, The Huguenots, pp. 141-44. Francis W. Cross, History of the Walloon and Huguenot Church at Canterbury (Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1969), pp. 15-16, gives an English translation of the articles by which the mayor and aldermen of Canterbury granted this permission.

as the Archbishop styled them, not only celebrated their worship and taught their children, but set up their looms and carried on their several trades."<sup>16</sup> Francis W. Cross, in his History of the Walloon and Huguenot Church at Canterbury, shows that the Huguenot schoolmasters, who were primarily engaged in teaching Huguenot children, also gave lessons in the French language to those Canterbury children whose parents wished them to have such instruction.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, growing up in Canterbury, Marlowe must have been exposed to most of the common attitudes and prejudices of Protestant England. The very geography of the city, as well as its deep involvement in the Church of England, must have impressed upon him a sense of the Protestant tradition. The coming of the Huguenots and the attendant talk Marlowe must have heard about their experiences under the oppressive Catholic government in France must have fed the nascent poet's imagination with images of the great Protestant-Catholic struggle then raging. We may wonder whether Marlowe was one of those sent to learn the French language from the Huguenot schoolmasters. At any event, all indications point to the supposition that Marlowe's social environment during

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<sup>16</sup>Smiles, The Huguenots, pp. 143-44.

<sup>17</sup>Cross, History of the Walloon and Huguenot Church at Canterbury, p. 15.

his formative years was decidedly Protestant.

Marlowe's family seems to have fitted comfortably into these Protestant surroundings, although there are a few anomalies which trouble the notion of the family's having neatly conformed to the everyday Protestantism of Canterbury. John Marlowe, the poet's father, as John Bakeless tells us, became "a church warden and . . . died a parish clerk."<sup>18</sup> William Urry, the Cathedral and City Archivist of Canterbury, has recently brought to light further information which casts some shadow over the rather rosy picture of the family sketched by Bakeless. The John Marlowe depicted by Urry seems to have been a sort of Mr. Micawber, "a noisy, self-assertive, improvident fellow," as Urry calls him, who was frequently in legal, financial or administrative difficulties.<sup>19</sup> When Christopher Marlowe was "a child of four," Urry tells us, John Marlowe "was called into the ecclestical court on a charge of non-attendance at church . . . ."<sup>20</sup> On another occasion, the elder Marlowe was sued by his parish for "non-payment

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<sup>18</sup>John Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe: The Man in His Time (New York, 1964), p. 9. Hereafter, this work will be cited as Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe. William Urry has shown that there is no basis to the supposition of Bakeless in Christopher Marlowe, p. 12, that Marlowe's mother was a clergyman's daughter. William Urry, "Marlowe and Canterbury," Times Literary Supplement, February 13, 1964, p. 136.

<sup>19</sup>Urry, "Marlowe and Canterbury," p. 136.

<sup>20</sup>Urry, "Marlowe and Canterbury," p. 136.

of rates."<sup>21</sup> Urry goes on to tell us that John Marlowe later "did duty as sidesman and churchwarden" and signed "the churchwarden's return for 1593 at St. Mary Breadman's . . ." where, later in life, he "took on the humble office of parish clerk . . . doing duty as bellringer, doorkeeper, cleaner and gravedigger."<sup>22</sup> This appointment may have been a charitable one on the part of the parish toward a formerly prosperous member of the community now down on his luck.

Clearly, then, in his own home, Christopher Marlowe was accustomed to the church, however strained his family's relations with it may occasionally have been. The Marlowe children were all christened,<sup>23</sup> the poet's younger brother seems probably to have been a choirboy in Canterbury Cathedral in 1580,<sup>24</sup> and, as John Marlowe was only, so far as we know, once accused of non-attendance at church, the family was probably regular in its observance of religious obligations.<sup>25</sup> Also, the fact that John Marlowe was

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<sup>21</sup>Urry, "Marlowe and Canterbury," p. 136.

<sup>22</sup>Urry, "Marlowe and Canterbury," p. 136.

<sup>23</sup>John Bakeless gives the details of the family's marriages, births and deaths as shown in the Canterbury church records, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, 3-30.

<sup>24</sup>Urry, "Marlowe and Canterbury," p. 136.

<sup>25</sup>It is interesting that one of Marlowe's sisters, Ann Cranford (b. 1571) was denounced by her parish's church wardens in 1603 as a "malicious uncharitable person seeking the unjust vexation of her neighbours . . ." and as a "scold, common swearer and blasphemer of the name of God . . ." Thus, as Urry says in relating this episode, "Christopher Marlowe is . . . not the only member of his family accused of blasphemy." Urry, "Marlowe and Canterbury," p. 136.

churchwarden and, later, parish clerk would support the supposition that he was considered, although somewhat irresponsible and argumentative, a reliable member of the parish.

Although we know nothing definite about Marlowe's earliest education, we are safe in the assumption that it was attained within an orthodox Protestant framework. As Bakeless comments, the young Marlowe must have had some early education or he would not have been accepted as a student at the King's School, Canterbury, "much less have won a Cambridge scholarship two years later."<sup>26</sup> Bakeless shows several ways in which Marlowe could have received his earliest education: he might have had some instruction from his father, who was literate; he might have studied under some clergyman; or he might have been educated under the direction of the city corporation's "common clerk" who had been entrusted in 1544, as Bakeless shows, with the duty of providing education for the children of citizens of the city.<sup>27</sup> Tucker Brooke inclines toward the supposition that Marlowe's earliest learning must have been obtained "at one of those parochial schools, kept by the parson or by a pedagogue leagued with him in

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<sup>26</sup> Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, 43.

<sup>27</sup> Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, 43.

office."<sup>28</sup>

But, wherever Marlowe received his first schooling, the conditions of education in his day make certain suppositions probable. Sixteenth century English educational theory regarded the first objective of the grammar school to be the instilling of proper religious principle and practice. Thomas Becon's The Catechism, published in 1559, says that, "Through the schoolmaster the youth of the Christian commonwealth is brought up in the knowledge of God and of his holy word, and also in the science of good letters and virtuous manners; and so trained up in them from their very cradles that as they grow in age so likewise they increase in godliness, virtue, learning, knowledge, good manners and innocency of life, and afterward become the faithful servants of God and profitable members of the commonweal, yea, and good citizens of the country where they inhabit."<sup>29</sup>

The schoolmaster in Alexander Nowell's A Catechism, or First Instruction and Learning of Christian Religion, published in 1571, says this to his student: "Forasmuch as the master ought to be to his scholars a second parent

<sup>28</sup>C. F. Tucker Brooke, The Life of Marlowe and The Tragedy of Dido Queen of Carthage, Volume I of The Works and Life of Christopher Marlowe, R. H. Case, general editor, (New York, 1966), p. 16. Hereafter, this work will be cited as Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe.

<sup>29</sup>Quoted by David Cressy, Education in Tudor and Stuart England (London, 1975), p. 21.

and father, not of their bodies, but of their minds; I see it belongeth to the order of my duty, my dear child, not so much to instruct thee civilly in learning and good manners, as to furnish thy mind, and that in thy tender years with good opinions and true religion."<sup>30</sup>

Because of this emphasis on religious training in the schools, the Tudor government took steps to maintain the religious orthodoxy of instruction in the grammar schools. As David Cressy says in his Education in Tudor and Stuart England: "Schoolmasters were supposed to inculcate virtue and religious orthodoxy but it was feared they might become agents of discord and dissent. To ensure the conformity of schoolmasters to the established Church of England, and to provide that they brought up their pupils in proper piety and obedience, Tudor and Stuart governments developed a system of licensing and supervising teachers . . . ." <sup>31</sup> We gain some insight into grammar school life in Marlowe's time from A Book of Certain

<sup>30</sup>Quoted by Cressy, Education in Tudor and Stuart England, p. 90.

<sup>31</sup>Cressy, Education in Tudor and Stuart England, p. 2. Cressy cites this passage from A Book of Certain Canons (1571): "the bishop shall allow no schoolmaster, nor account him worthy of the office, but whom he shall find in his judgement to be learned and worthy of that place, and whom he shall see commended by the testimony of godly men touching his life and manners and especially his religion." Education in Tudor and Stuart England, p. 29.

Canons, published in 1571, which recommended that schoolmasters should "either send . . . or bring" their students to the church whenever a sermon was being preached, "that from their childhoods" the students might "be brought up in godliness"; after the sermon, "lest" the students "should hear it negligently," the schoolmasters were recommended to "call and examine everyone what they have learned out of that sermon . . . ." <sup>32</sup>

To have succeeded in such a school environment, Marlowe must have known his catechism, have been attentive at sermons and have given at least the appearance of conforming to the established religion. If this had not been so, it is doubtful whether he could have been admitted to the King's School, no matter how high his academic achievement might otherwise have been.

Certainly once he was admitted to the King's School, the young Marlowe was exposed to a solidly Christian education. As John Bakeless shows, the educational system there was centered on religion. "School began," says Bakeless, "at six in the morning with responsive repetition of a psalm, and ended with another psalm at five in the afternoon." <sup>33</sup> Elsewhere Bakeless tells us that, while at the school, Marlowe was "Technically . . .

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<sup>32</sup>Quoted by Cressy, Education in Tudor and Stuart England, p. 29.

<sup>33</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, 44.

part of the Cathedral's ecclesiastical organization."<sup>34</sup>

One of the things by which Marlowe might have been impressed at this time was the fact that the King's School, established by St. Augustine in the sixth century, had been administered by monks until the time of Henry VIII. After the expulsion of the monks, the school was re-endowed as the King's School in 1541.<sup>35</sup> In short, Marlowe received a part of his formal education in an establishment that had recently felt the impact of the Reformation.

After a brief, but successful, career at the King's School, Marlowe entered Cambridge University, thanks to a scholarship provided by the will of Archbishop Matthew Parker, who had died in 1575.<sup>36</sup> This scholarship had been established to benefit deserving young men who might not otherwise have been able to attend the university. Marlowe's receipt of this scholarship indicates that he had previously proven himself to be intellectually able and deserving of higher education; but we may infer from this award other probable facts about Marlowe in his youth. Tucker Brooke infers from the terms of the scholarship that Marlowe must have been granted the award "as

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<sup>34</sup>Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, p. 32.

<sup>35</sup>Wraight and Stern, In Search of Christopher Marlowe, p. 38.

<sup>36</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, 47.

the personal choice of the archbishop's son, John Parker, who reserved the nomination to himself during his lifetime.<sup>37</sup> John Bakeless agrees that this award "would hardly have been possible unless the King's School was pretty well satisfied with him."<sup>38</sup> Marlowe, then, must have presented at least the appearance of what John Bakeless calls "schoolboy decorum" during his student days in Canterbury.<sup>39</sup> But more than this, it is important to note that the Parker scholarships actually took two distinct forms. The first form of scholarship available was designed to pay for a three-year term at the university; but the second form of the scholarship included this three year term and a further three-years at the university. According to Tucker Brooke, this six-year scholarship was available for those students who intended to take Holy Orders.<sup>40</sup> As Marlowe enjoyed the full six years allowed by Parker's bounty, he must have indicated to the authorities his intention of becoming a clergyman. The fact that Marlowe received the full scholarship also implies that Marlowe was judged to be a fit and likely candidate for the Anglican ministry.

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<sup>37</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 24.

<sup>38</sup>Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, p. 33.

<sup>39</sup>Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, p. 33.

<sup>40</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 26.

Most aspects of student life at Cambridge in the 1580's were dominated by the religious character of the university. The university statutes of 1570, still in force in Marlowe's time, reflected Cambridge's ecclesiastical tradition, as John Bakeless shows, in requiring that no advanced student of the university could leave his college "except he be clad in a gown reaching down to his ankles and a hood befitting his degree, or at least having a sacerdotal distinction about his neck."<sup>41</sup> Bakeless also cites a statement of the English bishops to Parliament to the effect that there were at Cambridge "an hundred preachers at the least, very worthy men." This figure increases in significance when joined with the fact that, in the year 1581 when Marlowe entered the university, the total number of scholars and masters at Cambridge was only 1862.<sup>42</sup> Obviously, a very high percentage of the university's population was active in the religious life. Moreover, it is most likely that Marlowe, during his years at Cambridge, must have come into intellectual contact with two of the great religious groups of the time, the Puritans and the Huguenots.

The heavy Puritan atmosphere at Cambridge is suggested by Patrick McGrath, in his Papists and Puritans

<sup>41</sup> Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, 51.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted by Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, 50.

Under Elizabeth I, who cites a study which shows that, of those English clergymen and schoolmasters who could rightly have been called Puritans between 1570 and 1590, "at least 228 had been in residence in Cambridge at some time between 1565 and 1575,"<sup>43</sup> only a decade before Marlowe's time at the university. Puritanism at Cambridge, of course, was not confined only to the decade cited by McGrath, and numerous distinguished Puritans were educated and themselves became teachers at the university. Sir William Cecil, later Lord Burghley, the chancellor of Cambridge University, although himself no Puritan, according to McGrath, "had a good deal of sympathy with many individual Puritans . . . ."<sup>44</sup>

As Wilbur Samuel Howell shows, Marlowe can scarcely have avoided being influenced at Cambridge by the teachings of the great Huguenot philosopher Pierre de la Ramee, known in England as Peter Ramus. Howell shows that Ramus' theory of logic was introduced to Cambridge in a series of lectures by Laurence Chaderton, who was a fellow of Christ's College between 1568 and 1577.<sup>45</sup> The teachings of Ramus on rhetoric first began to be accepted at Cambridge when,

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<sup>43</sup>Patrick McGrath, Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I (London, 1967), p. 157.

<sup>44</sup>McGrath, Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I, p. 158.

<sup>45</sup>Wilbur Samuel Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700 (New York, 1961), p. 179. Unfortunately, Howell tells us, Chaderton's lectures were never published and now apparently are lost.

in 1574, Gabriel Harvey "was appointed praelector in rhetoric . . . and began the preparation of the lectures which, as delivered in the spring of 1575 and 1576, and as published in 1577, are the first heavy commitment by an Englishman to the rhetorical thinking of Ramus . . . ." <sup>46</sup>

John Bakeless gives several examples which show how, during Marlowe's early years, Ramus' writings became increasingly prominent at Cambridge: in 1574, Sir Nicholas Bacon presented the Cambridge library with copies of Rami arithmetica and Ramus in artes liberales; in the same year, says Bakeless, "the Dialectica of Ramus began to replace the Organon of Aristotle in English universities"; in 1577, an edition of the Rhetorica Rami was entered in the Stationers' Register; and in 1584, "while Marlowe was in residence" there, Bakeless tells us, an edition of the Dialectica of Ramus was published at Cambridge. <sup>47</sup> As Roy Battenhouse tells us, "the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity while Marlowe was at Cambridge was Peter Baro, a Huguenot refugee who had received the appointment in 1574 through Burghley's sponsorship." <sup>48</sup> In the following years,

<sup>46</sup> Howell, Logic and Rhetoric in England, 1500-1700, pp. 178-179.

<sup>47</sup> Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, II, 82.

<sup>48</sup> Roy W. Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine, A Study in Renaissance Moral Philosophy (Nashville, Tenn., 1964), p. 24. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine.

John Bakeless says, Cambridge became "the leading school of Ramist philosophy."<sup>49</sup> Bakeless further says that Marlowe's exposure at Cambridge to the philosophy of Peter Ramus gave him the knowledge which made it possible for him to represent accurately Ramus' thought in The Massacre at Paris.<sup>50</sup>

Yet, in spite of the pervasive religious atmosphere, Marlowe does not seem to have had any difficulties with the university authorities over his religious opinions, nor is there any evidence that he was ever at this time suspected of heresy or atheism. The fact that Marlowe was granted a master's degree by Cambridge is sufficient evidence that there was up to this time no overt evidence of any religious irregularity in his public words and actions. As Tucker Brooke puts it, "it appears that Marlowe's life at the university was happy beyond the usual lot of poets . . . he maintained his scholarship . . . , took his degrees at the earliest possible dates, and left with a certainly unusual certificate of character from the Queen's Privy Council. He seems not to have been believed . . . an

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<sup>49</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, II, 82.

<sup>50</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, II, 82. The martyrdom of Ramus is depicted in Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris, ll. 365-421.

atheist, a papist, or a spy."<sup>51</sup>

The one blemish on Marlowe's university record, according to Tucker Brooke, is that Marlowe left the university without becoming a clergyman.<sup>52</sup> The reason that this can be regarded as a serious failing on Marlowe's part is the fact that, as we have seen, he had been able to stay at the university as long as he did because of the scholarship which had been established for the purpose of educating candidates for the ministry.

At the close of his life at Cambridge, in 1587, the English government had to intervene on Marlowe's behalf when the university authorities seem to have suspected him of having Roman Catholic ties or sympathies. On June 29th of that year, the Queen's Privy Council wrote to the authorities that, during an unexplained absence from the university, Marlowe "had done her Majesty good service and deserved to be rewarded for his faithful dealing" and had been "employed . . . in matters touching the benefit of his country . . . ."<sup>53</sup> Exactly what had been Marlowe's service to the government can only be guessed. Tucker Brooke speculates that these services must have been "fairly considerable," that he had probably not been "a regular

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<sup>51</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 37. As David Cressy points out, at this time "University graduates were . . . subject to tests of their religious orthodoxy." Cressy, Education in Tudor and Stuart England, p. 2.

<sup>52</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 37.

<sup>53</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, pp. 32-33.

government agent or spy," and that his mission was probably "of a moderately confidential character, capable of being misunderstood by the general public," probably taking him into France or the Low Countries for some time.<sup>54</sup>

Other than this major irregularity in his university career, Marlowe's life at Cambridge does not seem to have been anything out of the ordinary. This fact alone, considering the religious cast of Cambridge at this time, conflicts with Marlowe's reputation in later life. How would it have been possible, we may ask, for Marlowe to have spent six years at Cambridge without exposing himself to severe discipline if he had shown any sign of entertaining unorthodox religious views? The fact is that the sole barrier to Marlowe's success at Cambridge was his mysterious absence from the university; and at that time the suspicion against him was not that he was an atheist but that he was about to become a Roman Catholic.<sup>55</sup> As we have seen, the Privy Council was able to allay the fears of the University authorities on that issue and, implicitly, to guarantee Marlowe's orthodoxy.

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<sup>54</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 34.

<sup>55</sup>Tucker Brooke says that "Converts to Rome were at this time being made at Cambridge in alarming numbers; . . . disclosure of the fact that Marlowe had definitely abjured his intention of entering the English clergy, coupled with a report that he was going abroad, would have been quite sufficient to start a rumour of his having developed papist leanings." Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 33. See also Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, 83.

After his departure from the university, we know little about Marlowe's activities before the appearance on the stage of his first known play, Tamburlaine, part one. Marlowe's life in London is a matter for endless conjecture; on the one hand, as Tucker Brooke points out, he seems to have moved comfortably in the underworld and is known to have, on several occasions, been in trouble with the law: on October 1, 1589, Marlowe had to find two bondsmen to certify that he would appear "at the next Newgate session to answer what may be objected against him on the part of the Queen."<sup>56</sup> Marlowe needed his bondsmen, as Bakeless shows, because of his involvement in a street quarrel which had resulted in the death of another man. Legally, Marlowe seems to have been innocent, the evidence showing that the fatal blow had been struck by another, a friend of Marlowe's, although the original fight had been between Marlowe and the slain man. Bakeless, who tells the story of the fight and its aftermath in some detail, concludes that battles of this sort were by no means unusual among the actors and authors of the Elizabethan theatre.<sup>57</sup>

But aside from Marlowe's legal difficulties, we know little about his activities and nothing about his literary life, other than the fact that he wrote a small number of plays. Tucker Brooke argues that Marlowe does

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<sup>56</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 41.

<sup>57</sup>Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, pp. 125-31.

not seem to have descended to the production of "voluminous hackwork" in the theatre, nor is there reason to believe that he "wrote catchpenny pamphlets and ballads . . . ." <sup>58</sup>

Moreover, in the opinion of Tucker Brooke, Marlowe's extant later works, especially Edward II and Hero and Leander, "give evidence of matured thought and improved technique unlikely to have been achieved in so short a space of time without considerable opportunity for reflective leisure." <sup>59</sup>

During his brief career in London, Marlowe also acquired his reputation as a daring scoffer against religion, a blasphemer and an atheist. We must deal with these charges and allegations before discussing further Marlowe's relation to the religious orthodoxy of his time and place. "

Several of the charges of atheism against Marlowe, printed after the playwright's death, are of little historical importance in themselves. The principal examples of this type of accusation are found in Thomas Beard's The Theatre of God's Judgement (1597), William Vaughan's The Golden Grove (1600) and Edmund Rudierd's The Thunderbolt of God's Wrath (1618). <sup>60</sup> These accounts

<sup>58</sup> Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 38.

<sup>59</sup> Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 39.

<sup>60</sup> John Bakeless gives a brief summary of these works, their interrelationships, their inaccuracies and their influences in Christopher Marlowe, pp. 189-92.

have little historical value because, as Bakeless says, they were, at least in part, the invention of "Puritan preachers in search of edifying and also thrilling sermon material . . . ." <sup>61</sup> This being the case, these works are of more importance to a study of the history of the Puritan reaction against the theatre than to one of Christopher Marlowe.

But these accounts of Marlowe, although full of contradictions and inaccuracies, give us some idea of the kind of scandal it was possible to attach to Marlowe's name. Also, they are supported, at least in their general estimate of Marlowe's character, by the account of him reported by several individuals who knew him personally and were able during Marlowe's lifetime or very soon afterward to give their own accounts of his unorthodox religious opinions. The best and most concise summary of the charges of Marlowe's acquaintances is provided by C. F. Tucker Brooke in his Life of Marlowe. <sup>62</sup>

The earliest charge of atheism against Marlowe is found in Robert Greene's preface to Perimedes the Blacksmith (1588), where Greene condemns "that atheist Tamburlaine" and speaks of "such mad and scoffing poets, that have propheticall spirits as bred of Merlin's

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<sup>61</sup> Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, p. 189. Elsewhere, Bakeless points out that Rudierd's work was actually an abridgement of Beard's Theatre of God's Judgement. See Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, 145.

<sup>62</sup> Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, pp. 50-68; pp. 97-108.

race."<sup>63</sup> The reference to Marlowe's Tamburlaine is obvious; "Merlin" is a play on the name "Marlowe."<sup>64</sup> Later, in his Groatsworth of Wit (1592), the bilious Greene again attacks Marlowe, although not by name, for atheism and for his "pestilent Machiullian pollicy."<sup>65</sup> This passage almost certainly refers to Marlowe, who was well known for depicting "Machiavellian" figures such as Tamburlaine himself and the Guise in The Massacre at Paris (ca. 1593) and for presenting Machiavelli himself as the speaker of the prologue to The Jew of Malta.<sup>66</sup>

Another fellow playwright who indirectly accused Marlowe of atheism was Thomas Kyd, who did so in a letter to Sir John Puckering<sup>67</sup> written in 1593, shortly after Marlowe's murder. At this time, Kyd was himself suspected

<sup>63</sup>Quoted by Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 44.

<sup>64</sup>John Bakeless shows that at Cambridge Marlowe's name had been recorded in various forms, including "Marlen" and "Marlin" among others. Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, p. 56.

<sup>65</sup>Quoted by Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 97.

<sup>66</sup>Irving Ribner, "Greene's Attack on Marlowe: Some Light on Alphonsus and Selimus," Studies in Philology, LII (1955), pp. 162-71, argues that Greene wrote Alphonsus King of Aragon (ca. 1588) and The Tragicall Raigne of Selimus (ca. 1592) to answer that he took to be the philosophy of Marlowe's Tamburlaine. Ribner says that Greene must have been bitterly disappointed by the unfavorable reception of Alphonsus and have immediately written the attack on Marlowe in Perimedes the Blacksmith. Ribner, "Greene's attack on Marlowe," p. 165.

<sup>67</sup>Frederick S. Boas, ed., The Works of Thomas Kyd (Oxford, 1955) gives the complete text of this letter, pp. cviii-cx.

of atheism and had been arrested and possibly tortured.<sup>68</sup> Like Baines, Kyd mentions Marlowe's association with Sir Walter Raleigh's circle, although without mentioning Raleigh by name.<sup>69</sup> He also says that "some wille sweare" that Marlowe was an atheist, although he is himself noncommittal about this allegation.<sup>70</sup>

From Kyd's own point of view, the principal purpose of this letter was probably to clear himself of the ownership of a fragment of an heretical theological disputation which had been found among his papers when he was arrested. Kyd's explanation of how he came into the possession of these papers is that they belonged to Marlowe and had been "shuffled with some of myne (vnknown to me) by some occasion of or wrytinge in one chamber twoe yeares synce."<sup>71</sup> All too clearly, this document, written as it was after Marlowe's death, is self-serving; Kyd is using Marlowe's death as a convenient means of clearing himself of the charges brought against him, without fear of his testimony being contradicted. It is interesting that, even under these circumstances, Kyd is cautious in charging Marlowe with atheism.

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<sup>68</sup>In the letter to Puckering, Kyd speaks of "my paines and vndeserved tortures," Boas, The Works of Thomas Kyd, p. cix.

<sup>69</sup>Boas, The Works of Thomas Kyd, p. cix.

<sup>70</sup>Boas, The Works of Thomas Kyd, p. cix.

<sup>71</sup>Boas, The Works of Thomas Kyd, p. cviii.

Another document which supports accusations of atheism against Marlowe is a legal document known as the "Remembrances of words and matter agains Ric. Cholmeley." Three weeks after Marlowe's death, Richard Cholmeley was arrested and accused of atheism and treason.<sup>72</sup> The "Remembrances" contain the evidence to be brought against the accused. Among these notes we find an article which states that Cholmeley said and believed that "one Marlowe is able to shewe more sound reasons for atheism then any divine in England is able to give to prove divinitie, and that Marloe told him that he hath read the atheist lecture to Sir Walter Raleigh and others."<sup>73</sup>

Possibly related to the Cholmeley "remembrances" is the most damning evidence of Marlowe's alleged atheism, the document commonly called "the Baines libel", whose full title is "A Note Containing the opinion of on [sic] Christopher Marly Concerning his damnable Judgement of Religion, and scorn of Gods word."<sup>74</sup> This, like the

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<sup>72</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 64. It is not absolutely certain whether these accusations were made before or after Marlowe's death.

<sup>73</sup>Quoted by Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 65.

<sup>74</sup>The full text of the "Baines libel" is given by Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, pp. 98-100. As Tucker Brooke informs us, the original copy of the "Baines libel" was found in the same volume of papers as was the Cholmeley "Remembrances." Life of Marlowe, p. 64. It is difficult to tell whether Baines gave his information before or after Marlowe's murder. As Tucker Brooke points out, Baines seems to have supposed Marlowe to be still alive; yet there is a copy of his testimony which states that Baines gave his evidence after Marlowe's death.

Cholmeley document, is a legal memorandum, taken evidently from the dictation of Richard Baines, who was also under investigation on charges of treason and atheism. The opinions of Marlowe alleged by Baines may in fact constitute in summary form the "atheist lecture" which was mentioned in the evidence against Cholmeley. Baines here provides the most complete account of what may have been Marlowe's private views on the subject of religion.

Paul Kocher, who has written a detailed study of the "Baines libel," believes that Marlowe's conversation as reported by Baines "has all the air of a series of formal propositions, each capable of support by a section of detailed argument, and all articulated into a single overarching design."<sup>75</sup> Using the fragments reported by Baines, Kocher attempts to reconstruct Marlowe's original discourse "to suggest the running of a general current of continuity through the whole" and to show the "essential unity of design" implied in Marlowe's words.<sup>76</sup> In the

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Tucker Brooke presumes an error of fact on the part of the scribe who made the second copy of the "Baines libel" on the ground that Baines' information against Marlowe would have been useless after the poet's death. Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, pp. 67-68.

<sup>75</sup>Paul H. Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, A Study of His Thought, Learning and Character (New York, 1962), p. 33. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Kocher, Christopher Marlowe.

<sup>76</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 39.

view of Kocher, Marlowe's original discourse "was a work attacking Christian dogma on rationalistic and historic grounds . . . primarily concerned not to disprove the existence of God . . . but to discredit the authority of Scripture."<sup>77</sup>

Assuming the authenticity of Baines's evidence, it has been difficult, because of the fragmentary nature of this transcription, for critics and biographers to come to complete agreement as to the significance of the document. On the one hand, Tucker Brooke suggests that Marlowe may have tried at times deliberately to shock his listeners, and that the words reported by Baines may represent a combination of the "utterances of a dangerously rebellious spirit and casual deviltries invented for a momentary effect."<sup>78</sup> From this perspective we may assume Marlowe's discourse to have been delivered as a mock-learned burlesque disputation, full of deliberately coarse humor and intended both to shock and amuse. Yet even admitting the comic tone of some of Marlowe's propositions, we must admit that they have a serious perhaps satiric undertone. Paul Kocher, who takes the Baines report as a fair summary of Marlowe's views, with "no light or careless touches",<sup>79</sup> argues that the opinions

<sup>77</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 41.

<sup>78</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 40.

<sup>79</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 67.

expressed therein reflect a spirit of "revolutionary dissidence" which, Kocher says, was beginning to appear in the religious thought of the time.<sup>80</sup> At any rate, whether or not the Baines testimony supports a charge of atheism against Marlowe, it certainly supports one of irreverence and blasphemy, whatever may have been Marlowe's ultimate intention in constructing the discourse reported by Baines.

Can Marlowe, then, in the light of the foregoing evidence, be rightly called an atheist? He did not deny the existence of God, although he did attack organized religions. George T. Buckley, who has published an excellent study of the English Renaissance concept of atheism, denies that Marlowe can be considered an atheist in any modern meaning of the term.<sup>81</sup> Englishmen of the sixteenth century, however, must have used the word "atheism" in a somewhat broader sense. Roy Battenhouse says that "atheism" meant "simply the opposite of 'true religion'," and that the term referred not only to "atheists in the strict sense" but also to "Gentiles, Mohammedans, the Church of Rome, and the Sectaries."<sup>82</sup> In short, Battenhouse continues, Protestant apologists of Marlowe's time were "ready to take

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<sup>80</sup> Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 68.

<sup>81</sup> George T. Buckley, Atheism in the English Renaissance (New York, 1965), p. 136.

<sup>82</sup> Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine, pp. 42-43.

on all opponents as atheists."<sup>83</sup> Frederick Boas finds that "atheism" was "a useful slogan with which to denounce doctrines or actions that challenged constitutional, ecclesiastical or secular authority."<sup>84</sup> George T. Buckley views the word "atheism" as having an even broader practical application in the sixteenth century; according to him, the term "was applied indiscriminately to almost any kind of irregularity in religion, to Unitarianism, to Anabaptism, to Machiavellianism, and sometimes even to mere wickedness."<sup>85</sup> Using this definition, then, Buckley finds the conclusion unavoidable that Marlowe must have been considered an atheist, for, says Buckley, "if we are to accept as true any part of the charges of Baines and Kyd, we have no choice but to conclude that he did not believe in the divinity of Christ."<sup>86</sup> Within the sixteenth century usage of the term "atheism" as Buckley has explained it above, Marlowe could have been accused of atheism for such unbelief, but also for his obvious interest in Machiavellianism, as expressed in The Jew of Malta and

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<sup>83</sup>Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine, p. 43.

<sup>84</sup>Frederick Boas, Christopher Marlowe, A Biographical and Critical Study (Oxford, 1960), p. 109. Hereafter, this work will be cited as Boas, Christopher Marlowe.

<sup>85</sup>Buckley, Atheism in the English Renaissance, p. 136.

<sup>86</sup>Buckley, Atheism in the English Renaissance, p. 136. Tucker Brooke points out that the anti-Trinitarian tract said by Kyd to have belonged to Marlowe also expressed doubts about the divinity of Christ. Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 57.

elsewhere, and for his evident concern with homosexuality as evinced in Edward II and other plays.

At any rate, Tucker Brooke finds no "adequate, reason for supposing that penal action against Marlowe was contemplated in 1593."<sup>87</sup> As Frederick Boas shows, Marlowe was not apparently considered dangerous by the Privy Council, for "Instead of being imprisoned and tortured like Kyd, he was ordered after the customary formula to give his daily attendance on their lordships till he was licensed to the contrary."<sup>88</sup> As Tucker Brooke points out, Marlowe "was granted the courtesies usual in the case of gentlemen brought before the Privy Council for the information of that body."<sup>89</sup> Tucker Brooke adds that the "discipline to which persons in Marlowe's situation were subjected at this time seems to have been of the laxest kind."<sup>90</sup>

We do not know why Marlowe was treated so lightly by the Privy Council. Perhaps it was because of Marlowe's connections with influential men such as Sir Walter Raleigh

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<sup>87</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 62.

<sup>88</sup>Boas, Christopher Marlowe, p. 244.

<sup>89</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 58. Elsewhere Tucker Brooke reasons that if Marlowe had been considered dangerous he would not have been left at liberty. Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 60.

<sup>90</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 69.

and Thomas Walsingham;<sup>91</sup> possibly it was because of Marlowe's previous service to the crown, in virtue of which the Privy Council, as we have already seen, had interposed on Marlowe's behalf in his difficulties at Cambridge in 1587.<sup>92</sup> At any rate, before his death, the Privy Council did not evidently regard Marlowe as a dangerous atheist. Most of the evidence against him, however, did not appear until after his death. If the Privy Council knew Marlowe as the author of Tamburlaine, The Jew of Malta and his other plays, which is by no means certain, they did not apparently take the plays as a serious threat to public morality nor as statements of an unorthodox religious viewpoint.

We cannot deny that there was in Marlowe's private life and opinions something unorthodox, something that would have been considered dangerous had it come to public view. As Paul H. Kocher comments, the numerous points of agreement among the several witnesses, unless we accept a theory of a conspiracy against Marlowe, argue for the authenticity of the outline of Marlowe's private character and opinions that may be formed from the testimony

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<sup>91</sup>According to John Bakeless, Walsingham, who was possibly Marlowe's patron, became Sir Thomas only some time after Marlowe's death. Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, p. 173.

<sup>92</sup>Tucker Brooke points out that the two "most influential" members of the Privy Council in 1593, Archbishop Whitgift and Lord Burghley, "had signed the letter concerning Marlowe that had been sent to Cambridge in 1587." Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 61.

especially of Kyd and Baines.<sup>93</sup>

Yet the fact remains that Marlowe's atheism, if we may call it that, was a private matter, known only to a few, and seemingly unsuspected by the government and the public. Certainly the plays themselves were not censored for any political or religious reason so far as we know, and they were freely presented in more or less the forms that we know them on the stage and circulated in print.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, Marlowe's atheism seems to have been an element only of his final years and to have been only one part even of that period of his life. Even accepting Marlowe's unorthodox religious view as the

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<sup>93</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 27. An interesting, though far-fetched "conspiracy theory" regarding Marlowe's death is the essence of Calvin Hoffman's The Murder of the Man Who Was Shakespeare (New York, 1955), which expresses the theory that Marlowe, about to be arrested by the Privy Council, staged his own "murder," went into hiding and assumed the name of Shakespeare, under which mask he produced his subsequent plays.

<sup>94</sup>The only known instance of the suppression of material from any of Marlowe's plays is in the 1590 printing of the first part of Tamburlaine, where the printer, in his preface "To the Gentlemen Readers," confessed that he had deliberately "omitted and left out some fond and friuolous Iestures" which had evidently formed part of the original version of the play as presented in London. This omitted material seems more likely to have been vulgar than controversial. The complete preface is printed by C. F. Tucker Brooke, ed., in The Works of Christopher Marlowe (Oxford, 1910), p. 7. All subsequent references to Marlowe's poems and plays will be to this edition. Quotations from this edition will be identified parenthetically and by line number within the text.

dominant element in his thought, I think we must assume that he was rarely able to give full and unbridled expression to such opinions. The existence of the Lord Chamberlain and the Stationers' Register and the Privy Council itself would have acted as strong enough checks to such expression, if public opinion and the timidity of theatre managers and printers did not.

Any subversive opinions that Marlowe held, then, must have been reserved for very private expression, whether in speech or in writing, or else must have been sufficiently disguised or transmuted as to make them acceptable to the government, church and populace. In other words, it was profitable, even necessary, if Marlowe was not orthodox in his views, for him to seem so when he presented his plays for public performance.

But I am not certain that much conscious effort would have been required to make Marlowe seem orthodox. For, judging by the facts of his early life and from suppositions that we can make about his education, we are justified in assuming that one of the most important influences on Marlowe's personal development must have been sixteenth century English Protestantism which was itself strongly influenced by the experience of Protestants in Catholic countries, including Englishmen during the reign of Queen Mary, and the Huguenots who had come to England as refugees from Catholic oppression at home.

Clearly, the Protestant-Catholic struggle was one of the central political and religious facts of the period and, as such, had far-reaching social effects. Marlowe can hardly have failed to be influenced by this struggle. In his childhood in Canterbury, where he must have been exposed to the presence of Huguenot refugees, this struggle must have impressed itself strongly upon Marlowe's way of thinking. At Cambridge, his theological training would have brought him again into contact with the terms of this dispute; here, too, he would have been exposed to the thought of Pierre de la Ramée, the great Huguenot philosopher. As an observer of the life around him, Marlowe would have been aware of the emotional responses which this sectarian dispute was capable of provoking. As a playgoer in London and elsewhere, he would have seen, as we shall see, how this religious conflict had yielded powerful subject matter for numerous playwrights. When he came to write his own plays, then, he also made use of the Protestant-Catholic contention for his own artistic and commercial purposes.

In the chapters ~~that follow, I shall outline the~~ history of the anti-Catholic movement in sixteenth century England, first from the historical perspective, showing that the Tudor governments, aside from that of Queen Mary, gave high priority to the spreading of propaganda against the Church of Rome and the Catholic countries.

Next, I shall attempt to show that a tradition existed in the English theatre in the Tudor period of supporting the government's anti-Catholic policies. Finally, I shall attempt to show that Christopher Marlowe's plays reflect this tradition and these policies.

In short, I hope to show that, although Marlowe's reputation as a freethinker and religious rebel may have been well deserved, he was also able, through the exploitation of the common attitudes and prejudices of his time, to pass in public as an orthodox member of Elizabethan society.

## CHAPTER TWO

### ELIZABETHAN ANTI-CATHOLICISM IN LAW AND LITERATURE

"He that is willing to tolerate any religion or discrepant way of religion, besides his own, unless it be in matters merely indifferent, either doubts of his own or is not sincere in it. He that is willing to tolerate any unsound opinion that his own may also be tolerated, though never so sound, will for a need hang God's Bible at the Devil's girdle."<sup>1</sup> The author of these words, Nathanael Ward, a New England Puritan preacher, also condemns anyone willing to tolerate "divers religions or . . . one religion in segregant shapes" because, according to Ward, if such a person should examine "his heart by daylight, his conscience will tell him he is either an atheist or a heretic or a hypocrite, or a captive to some lust. Poly-piety is the greatest impiety in the world."<sup>2</sup>

Although he wrote these words late in life and in

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<sup>1</sup>Nathanael Ward, The Simple Cobler of Aggawam in America, ed. P. M. Zall (Lincoln, Neb., 1969), p. 40. The Simple Cobler was first published in London in 1647. See Moses Coit Tyler, A History of American Literature, 1607-1765 (New York, 1962), pp. 210-221, for a brief summary and evaluation of Ward's life, work and ideas.

<sup>2</sup>Ward, The Simple Cobler of Aggawam in America, p. 38.

the New World, Ward may, in a sense, be considered an Elizabethan, having been born in England in 1578 and having received a degree from Emmanuel College, Cambridge, in 1603, where he had been considered one of the most learned students.<sup>3</sup> Although he belongs to the history of New England Puritanism, rather than to that of the Elizabethan Age, Ward's views on "Poly-piety" would have been acceptable to many Elizabethan Protestants.

For the sixteenth century did not generally regard religious tolerance as a virtue. We are told repeatedly by the writers of the period that truth, especially religious truth, was an absolute, and that the slightest deviation from that absolute must inevitably lead man into Error's Den. True religion, the Elizabethans believed, was revealed by God in the Scriptures; any path which led away from this firm foundation, the one central truth of God's word, led necessarily to heresy and must therefore have been set out by the devil or his agents. This logical progression of thought is clearly set out in the Protestant literature of the period, in the moralities and interludes, the plays, the poems, the sermons, the pamphlets and in the philosophical and historical works. This attitude finds its epic expression in the greatest poem of the sixteenth century, The Faerie Queene of Edmund Spenser.

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<sup>3</sup>Tyler, A History of American Literature, 1607-1765, p. 211.

Heretics, as deviants from the path of truth, were regarded as dangerous because of the possibility of their spreading their disbelief like a contagion to members of the faithful of God's Church. As a result, heretics and others considered unorthodox in their religious views were subjected to persecution, expulsion, imprisonment and even execution in all the Christian countries of Europe. In short, what we may call intolerance today was regarded as a positive virtue and a means of protecting the divinely revealed truth.

But Elizabethan anti-Catholic policies were not solely espoused out of a desire to protect the purity of the Church of England and its members. The Roman Catholic Church, with its influence in Spain and France, was perceived to be posing an immediate threat to the political and religious sovereignty of England. Puritanism, which also threatened the structure of the English Church and, ultimately, of the government, was regarded as less of a threat in the first three decades of Elizabeth's reign because, although the Puritans preached dissent, they were generally loyal Englishmen, and they did not, as many Roman Catholics did, wish to support any foreign claimants to the English throne; moreover, the Puritans were among the staunchest opponents of the Pope and his Church. In short, the Catholics, unlike the Puritans, posed an actual, immediate political danger, and therefore the government took steps to control them.

Anti-Catholicism, however, was not entirely a matter of religious purity nor yet of political expediency. It was also a popular sentiment, shared evidently by a very large number of individual Englishmen; its emotional roots reached deep into the consciousness of the people and were nurtured by memories of the violent and repressive anti-Protestant policies of the late Queen Mary.

For the former Queen had amply deserved the epithet "Bloody Mary" because of the tactics she had used in her attempts to suppress English Protestantism during her brief reign. As Arnold Oskar Meyer points out, during the five years of Mary's reign, more than three hundred English Protestants were executed because of their beliefs.<sup>4</sup> Countless others were tortured and subjected to fines and imprisonment for the same cause. But Mary's efforts, in the long run, actually worked against the Catholic cause by making many Englishmen turn more firmly against the Church of Rome. As G. R. Elton says, Mary's attack on Protestantism and the means that she employed "made the English for centuries hate Catholicism as a cruel and persecuting religion."<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps it was inevitable that Mary should have

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<sup>4</sup>Arnold Oskar Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, J. R. McKee, tr. (London, 1916), p. 164.

<sup>5</sup>G. R. Elton, "The Reformation in England," The New Cambridge Modern History, Volume II: The Reformation, G. R. Elton, ed. (Cambridge, 1965), p. 248.

had difficulty ruling the country, even apart from the persecutions that she instigated. Although the reign seems to have begun well enough as regards Mary's relations with Parliament and the people, there were far too many facts about Mary that almost certainly had to cause trouble for her.<sup>6</sup> For one thing, as Meyer points out, "As the daughter of a Spanish mother and the wife of a Spanish king, Mary was out of touch with English sentiment and had no sympathy for national and political ideals."<sup>7</sup> At the same time, many Englishmen must have had some misgivings about Mary's ascent to the throne because they had for years considered her to be illegitimate.<sup>8</sup> Finally, Mary was a Roman Catholic ruling a nation that for more than a generation had been committed to Protestantism. Many Englishmen, especially clergymen, must have anticipated serious political problems arising from this.

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<sup>6</sup>There had been much popular support for Mary's elevation to the throne, according to A. F. Pollard, Henry VIII (London, 1905), p. 345. According to S. T. Bindoff, Mary enjoyed amicable relations with Parliament at the beginning of her reign. S. T. Bindoff, Tudor England (Baltimore, 1950), pp. 168-69.

<sup>7</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup>When Henry had his marriage to Catherine annulled in 1533, Mary should presumably have become de facto illegitimate. However, there seems to have been some doubt as to whether or not this was the case. See A. F. Pollard, Henry VIII, p. 220n and p. 241n. In any event, Mary was officially declared legitimate by Act of Parliament only after she had actually become queen. See Bindoff, Tudor England, p. 168.

combination of the Queen's connections with Spain and Rome, and the troubling question of her very legitimacy.

The outcome of these difficulties was that, during Queen Mary's reign, religious controversy became inextricably entangled with politics. Because of Mary's marriage to Philip II of Spain, as Arnold Oskar Meyer puts it, "the cause of the reformation became . . . identified with the cause of the nation in the minds of many Englishmen."<sup>9</sup> The fact of Mary's presence on the throne gave some Catholic countries political assurances that could only make Englishmen feel uncomfortable. For example, as G. R. Elton tells us, the Emperor Charles V, because of Mary's religion and relations with Spain, saw her elevation to the throne as an opportunity to bring England under the Hapsburg influence.<sup>10</sup> Because Mary had, at least officially, returned England to the Catholic Church, after her death Henry II of France proclaimed his son the Dauphin and his daughter-in-law Mary Stuart to be the new king and queen of England.<sup>11</sup> Episodes such as these reinforced the identification in the English mind of a return to the Church of Rome with the threat of foreign domination.

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<sup>9</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup>Elton, "The Reformation in England," pp. 246-47.

<sup>11</sup>R. B. Wernham, "The British Question, 1559-69," The New Cambridge Modern History, Volume III: The Counter-Reformation and Price Revolution, 1559-1610, ed. R. B. Wernham (Cambridge, 1968), p. 211.

Englishmen now came to fear that the embrace of Rome could only mean subjugation by Spain or France. This fear of foreign domination and the conviction that Roman Catholicism was a vicious, persecuting religion were the principal legacies of Mary's brief reign.

But anti-Catholic sentiment in England did not flourish solely because of this heritage. It was strengthened by what Patrick McGrath calls "the ill-advised and incompetent policy of the papacy and of Spain" which "made it easy for the English government to treat Catholicism as a political menace."<sup>12</sup> In 1570, when the Pope issued his bull excommunicating Queen Elizabeth, according to McGrath, he was, in effect, seen to be declaring war on England.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the actions of Roman Catholic prelates during the first decade of Elizabeth's reign did much to prejudice both the Queen and the people against the Church of Rome. As Meyer points out, some of the Roman Catholic bishops in England regarded Elizabeth as heretical and attempted to bring "spiritual censures" against her.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, according to

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<sup>12</sup>Patrick McGrath, Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I (London, 1967), p. 105.

<sup>13</sup>McGrath, Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I p. 71. McGrath adds, however, that the English government had effectively declared war on the Roman Catholic Church in 1559.

<sup>14</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 25.

Meyer, "the idea of excommunicating Elizabeth was first entertained, not in Rome or in any other foreign country, but in her own land and among her English subjects."<sup>15</sup>

With all of these sparks to public sentiment, it is not surprising that many Englishmen during the first decade of Queen Elizabeth's reign came to regard mere membership in the Church of Rome as treasonable in itself, nor that the people should have supported the government's policies against the Catholics. Indeed, to a great degree, the government's anti-Catholic policy reflected the feelings of many Englishmen and had the support of the people. Meyer shows that, at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, "the abolition of Catholic worship was carried out by the people with a good will."<sup>16</sup> The removal of crucifixes, statues and altars from churches, according to Meyer, "was the occasion of popular rejoicings . . . . The zeal for destruction bordered on vandalism. Stained glass windows were broken, walls scraped bare of frescoes, the figure of St. Thomas cast down and beheaded, missals, vestments and altar hangings burnt by the mob with noisy applause . . . ." <sup>17</sup> Anthony Munday, in a pamphlet published

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<sup>15</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 26.

<sup>16</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 32.

<sup>17</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 32.

in 1582, describes the fierce, anti-Catholic hostility of crowds witnessing the executions of Catholic priests in London.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, as Meyer shows; the penal laws enacted against Catholics "were the work of parliament, not of the Privy Council."<sup>19</sup> Clearly, the persecution of Roman Catholics in England was supported by the will of the common people as well as by the force of the throne and the Privy Council.

Unlike Mary's persecution of Protestants, however, Elizabeth's was not a bloody persecution. Relatively few people were executed for belonging to the Catholic Church, and most of these were priests.<sup>20</sup> There was no outcry against these executions because the victims had been found guilty not of heresy but of treason under the provisions of laws which we will examine below; moreover, in general the English people at this time fully supported the government's anti-Catholic position.

Since, then, the government evidently enjoyed this

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<sup>18</sup> A. M. Anthony Munday, A breefe and true reporte of the Execution of Certaine Traytours at Tiborne, the xxviii and xxx dayes of Maye, 1582. (London, 1582).

<sup>19</sup> Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 182.

<sup>20</sup> Meyer says that the total number of Catholics executed for their religion was approximately 190, of whom 160 were priests. Approximately 80 other Catholics, according to Meyer, died while in prison. England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 164.

popular support, we might ask why the Queen did not use as much force as she might have done against the Catholics. Perhaps the government realised that a ruthless, bloody persecution in the Marian style might have had the undesired effect of giving martyrs to the Catholic cause, thereby perhaps strengthening the faith of the survivors and creating sympathy for them among Protestants. Another potential danger was that too firm a hand employed against her Catholic subjects might have provoked Spain or France to take action against Elizabeth. In any event, the Queen's government elected to try to break the spirits of the English Catholics by subjecting them to numerous legal harassments and humiliations rather than helping them to attain the moral strength and dignity conferred by the status of martyrs.

The rationale of the anti-Catholic laws enacted under Elizabeth has been summarized by Meyer, who says that, "Every catholic was suspected of being an enemy of his country and was treated accordingly."<sup>21</sup> The laws which were put into effect upon this rationale were intended, as Patrick McGrath summarizes them, to forbid the practice of Catholicism and any recognition of papal authority.<sup>22</sup> Meyer tells us that Catholics were excluded from holding

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<sup>21</sup> Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 169.

<sup>22</sup> McGrath, Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I, p. 56.

any public offices or receiving any honors.<sup>23</sup> After the Queen's excommunication, the oppression of Catholics increased. Official vigilance was intensified in the search for signs of secret Roman Catholicism; suspicions of this faith were supported with even greater force than before.<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps the most immediate and direct action that the Queen's government can be said to have taken against the greatest number of her Roman Catholic subjects was that forbidding the Catholic mass. The celebration of mass was forbidden, although at first this prohibition was not strictly enforced; but, as Meyer shows, prominent Catholics were occasionally jailed for having attended mass.<sup>25</sup>

Probably, the intention at this time was merely to make an example of these persons as a warning to other Catholics. By 1568, however, according to Meyer, "imprisonment for attendance at mass increased in frequency and was carried to such lengths that it encroached even on the privileges of the ambassadors of foreign powers."<sup>26</sup> Between 1570 and

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<sup>23</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 124.

<sup>24</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, pp. 127-28. See also McGrath, Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I, p. 114.

<sup>25</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 124.

<sup>26</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 126.

1580, says Meyer, "it was not uncommon for women and children to be arrested while hearing mass and cast into prison."<sup>27</sup>

The prohibition of the mass was not the harshest action taken against the English Catholics, however. Between 1571 and 1593; a series of laws was passed which placed increasingly tighter restrictions upon Roman Catholics in England. The purpose of these laws seems to have been in effect to make the practice of Catholicism prima facie evidence of treason, and thus to make it impossible for Catholics to remain in England.

An act of 1571 forbade the reception or teaching of any papal bull or other "writing or instrument" of the pope, under penalty of high treason. Plainly, the provision was a direct reaction to the previous year's papal bull which had excommunicated the Queen. The same act provided strict penalties for anyone aiding or concealing a person guilty of the above crime. Finally, this act forbade the receipt of any sacramentals or any such "superstitious things from the bishop or see of Rome."<sup>28</sup>

In 1581, another anti-Catholic act was passed which provided that anyone who persuaded another to become a Catholic was guilty of high treason, and that anyone who aided or concealed such a person was also guilty of treason.

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<sup>27</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 176.

<sup>28</sup>McGrath, Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I, p. 103.

This provision was drawn up specifically to deal with the missionary priests who were then in England. The same act imposed a fine of two hundred marks and one year's imprisonment for anyone who celebrated the mass, and heavy fines for anyone over the age of sixteen years of age who did not attend Protestant church services.<sup>29</sup>

In 1585, yet stricter measures were directed against Catholic priests. This act provided that anyone in England who had been ordained a Catholic priest since the coronation of Queen Elizabeth was to be regarded as a traitor without the requirement of any further evidence. This law granted such priests the option of leaving England immediately with the understanding that any who returned afterward would be considered guilty of high treason. But this act was not directed only at the clergy. It also provided that anyone harboring Catholic priests was guilty of a felony punishable by death. Another provision of this law was that anyone who had been educated at a Jesuit college or seminary and refused to swear the oath of

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<sup>29</sup>McGrath, Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I, p. 176. McGrath mentions that Meyer, in England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, and J. E. Neale, in Elizabeth and Her Parliaments, both argue that the charge of high treason attached only to one whose intention in making a convert to Catholicism was to subvert the English crown. McGrath himself feels that the wording of the act did not distinguish intentions, and cites Philip Hughes, in The Reformation in England, to show that the courts interpreted any conversion to Catholicism as a withdrawal of allegiance to the English monarch.

supremacy was a traitor. Other punishments were specified in this act for anyone who gave money to any Catholic seminary or who sent his children abroad without special license. Finally, anyone who knew the whereabouts of Jesuit priests in England was required to report this information under pain of imprisonment and any official who received such information and concealed it would be subject to severe fines.<sup>30</sup> McGrath cites a study written by Father Philip Hughes which shows that of one hundred and forty-six persons put to death between the passage of this act in 1585 and the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, one hundred and twenty-three were condemned under the provisions of this law.<sup>31</sup>

In 1586, Parliament took action to enforce more strictly the provisions of the Act of 1581 which had imposed fines on Catholics who did not attend Protestant services. In five years, only sixty-nine persons had been fined, and the amounts received totalled only slightly less than nine thousand pounds. The new statute required only a single indictment, after which the person fined was presumed guilty until he made a formal recantation. Each person indicted was then required to make two payments each year to the Exchequer. Failure to make these payments could

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<sup>30</sup> McGrath, Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I, pp. 192-93.

<sup>31</sup> McGrath, Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I, p. 193.

be punished by the seizure of all of the guilty party's goods and two-thirds of his landed property. Under this law, the government collected from Catholics more than thirty-six thousand pounds between 1587 and 1592.<sup>32</sup>

An Act of 1593 brought even stronger pressure against English Catholic laymen by forbidding them to travel more than five miles from their homes without a special permit from the local justice of the peace and the bishop. Anyone who was found guilty of disobeying this stricture could be punished by the forfeiture of his property.<sup>33</sup> Again, Catholics could gain complete freedom only by submitting publicly to the English Church.<sup>34</sup>

Although such oppression might be considered as a series of defensive measures taken by the government in a time when English sovereignty was seriously endangered by the Catholic powers of Europe, we must take into account that the attempt to suppress the Catholic Church in England continued even after the danger from abroad had abated, when self-defense was no longer as necessary as it had been. With the defeat of the Spanish Armada, in 1588, England's political position in Europe was secure; but this fact did

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<sup>32</sup> McGrath, Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I, p. 198.

<sup>33</sup> Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 149.

<sup>34</sup> Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 173.

not in any way mollify the anti-Catholic policies of Elizabeth's government. In fact, according to Meyer: "The more the danger of invasion decreased, the more pronounced became the propaganda in favour of the state church. When once the need of securing the protestant government against the possibility of a catholic reaction became less imminent, the state, conscious of its victory and security, set before itself a higher task, the attainment of religious unity."<sup>35</sup>

As we have already seen, the English anti-Catholic movement was motivated by a combination of religious and political motives, with a very strong emotional element that reinforced the political and religious aims and ensured the support of the common people. The fact that imminent dangers from abroad no longer existed did not decrease English anti-Catholic zeal. For the government and church's goal had never been merely the avoidance of immediate danger from the Church of Rome, but the assurance that such dangers as Rome seemed to threaten should never again be possible. The only means by which this end could be attained seemed nothing less than the complete and permanent suppression of the Church of Rome in England.

Thus far we have seen how this goal was sought by means of legal regulations and restrictions. But other

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<sup>35</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 175.

action was taken, both officially and unofficially, in the form of a steady stream of anti-Catholic polemic, satire and simple abuse that poured from England's printing presses throughout the reign of Queen Elizabeth. These anti-Catholic writings were of many kinds: learned, reasoned treatises demonstrating the theological and doctrinal errors of Rome; libels of the most scurrilous sort, attacking the characters of well-known figures in the Church of Rome; carefully compiled historical studies of the conflict between Catholics and Protestants; and semifictitious broadside ballads and prose tales, often bawdy, whose overall effect was to lampoon the Church of Rome and its adherents.

Perhaps "propaganda" would be too strong a term for these writings; the word suggests a well-organized, centrally controlled attack on Roman Catholicism in print. But the writings which I am going to discuss do not seem to be part of a single, well-orchestrated propaganda campaign. Rather, the diversity of writings, and of sources, seems to evince the truly general and popular character of Elizabethan anti-Catholicism. It is true that certain members of the government waged a propaganda war against the Roman Catholic Church. Some prominent clergymen did the same. But it is by no means certain that these figures ever worked together in planning their publications. In addition, there were a number of writers, seemingly

connected formally with neither church nor state, who made their own contributions to the printed assault against Rome. In this group, some writers may actually have been paid for their services by members of the Privy Council or the church hierarchy, although there is no record of this; others of this group, in seeking patronage or promotion, may have written anti-Catholic works as a means of getting the attention of some highly-placed figure. But it is wrong to speak of the numerous printed attacks on Roman Catholicism as a single propaganda campaign. Rather, all of these works appeared because their authors shared a common religious vision which colored their historical and political outlooks.

This is not to say, however, that the government launched no official propaganda campaign against Roman Catholics. At least one member of the Privy Council has been shown to have been certainly involved as a patron to writers of anti-Catholic literature.

Eleanor Rosenberg, in her study, Leicester, Patron of Letters, shows that Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, whom she describes as having been, especially during the 1580's, "a leader . . . of a militantly Protestant, anti-Catholic group of nobles,"<sup>36</sup> acted as patron to a large number of writers, including poets, translators and pamphleteers. Miss Rosenberg shows that Leicester, through

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<sup>36</sup>Eleanor Rosenberg, Leicester, Patron of Letters (New York, 1955), p. 30.

this body of writers, was ultimately responsible for the production of many literary and polemical works designed to turn the thought and attitude of the English public, even more than it already was, against Roman Catholicism.<sup>37</sup> In short, Miss Rosenberg finds, in the works of certain writers "who can be called proteges of Leicester," evidence from 1581 onward "of a well-organized campaign to weaken the cause of Catholicism in England."<sup>38</sup>

Among the names that Rosenberg lists of anti-Catholic writers patronized by Leicester, we find such prominent names as John Day, the playwright; Anthony Munday, playwright and pamphleteer, from whose A breefe and true reporte we have already quoted; Arthur Golding, the translator of Ovid. We also find less well-known names in this list, such as James Sanforde, Christopher Fetherstone, and John Harmar.<sup>39</sup> Some of the anti-Catholic titles published under Leicester's patronage are these: A Confvtation of the Popes Bull Against Elizabeth, by Henry Bullinger (1572); Apologia pro caena Dominica contra Missam, by Ascham (1577); The Rooting out of the Romish Supremacie, by William Chauncy (1580); The Iesuites Banner, by Meredith

<sup>37</sup>Rosenberg provides a detailed account of Leicester's anti-Catholic activities as a patron of letters in her seventh chapter, "Anti-Catholic Propaganda," Leicester, Patron of Letters, pp. 230-77.

<sup>38</sup>Rosenberg, Leicester, Patron of Letters, p. 265.

<sup>39</sup>Rosenberg, Leicester, Patron of Letters, p. 276.

Hammer (1581); A Discouerie of Edmund Campion and his Confederates, by Anthony Munday (1582); and A View of the Romish Hydra and Monster Traison, by Laurence Humphrey (1588).<sup>40</sup> Plainly, a substantial number of anti-Catholic works are attributable to the patronage of such influential men as the Earl of Leicester. But not only the members of the government wished to attack the Church of Rome, in print.

Another important source of anti-Catholic writings was that group of Protestants, many of them well-educated clergymen, who had gone into voluntary exile in Germany during the reign of Queen Mary. A member of this group wrote one of the most influential books of the Elizabethan age.

In 1559, John Foxe, a preacher, published the enormous work known popularly as "Foxe's Book of Martyrs" and whose full title, matching in length the massiveness of the book itself, is this: Actes and Monuments of these latter and perilous dayes, touching matters of the Church, wherein are comprehended and described the great persecutions and horrible troubles that haue been wrought

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<sup>40</sup>Rosenberg, Leicester, Patron of Letters, pp. 355-62. These titles are found in an appendix which lists all those works which acknowledged Leicester's patronage. Other titles on this list may also have contained anti-Catholic propaganda, but I have selected only those which obviously contain attacks upon the Church of Rome.

and practiced by the Romishe prelates, specialye in this Realme of England and Scotlande, from the yeare of our Lorde a thousande, unto the tyme nowe present.<sup>41</sup> After its first publication, Foxe's book went through many processes of expansion and revision in the sixteenth century before taking its final shape. It was printed in 1559, 1563, 1570, 1576, and 1583, gradually becoming larger and more extensive with each printing. In 1587, Foxe died, but other editors continued his work, publishing an abridged version of the book in 1589, and complete versions in 1596 and 1610.<sup>42</sup>

Actes and Monuments met with immediate and ready acceptance in Protestant England. The importance of the book in the history of the English Church, especially in the Elizabethan age, can hardly be underrated. Historian

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<sup>41</sup> John Foxe, Actes and Monuments . . . , 8 vols. (New York, 1965). This edition is a reprint of a nineteenth century version of Foxe, edited by Josiah Pratt, based on an 1837 edition by S. R. Cattley and published 1843-1849. According to William Haller, this edition is slightly bowdlerized and includes some seventeenth century materials. In those portions I have quoted, I have found this version to be an accurate reproduction of the London, 1585, text. In all future references, both in the text and in the notes, for the sake of convenience I shall refer to this book simply as Actes and Monuments. Some helpful modern studies of Foxe and his book are these: William Haller, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation (London, 1963); J. F. Mozley John Foxe and His Book (New York, 1970); Helen C. White, Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs (Madison, Wisc., 1963). For Haller's comments on the Cattley-Pratt edition, see Haller's Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation, p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> Haller, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation, p. 9.

G. M. Trevelyan felt that the only writer of the sixteenth century who might be judged to have exerted a greater influence in the time of Shakespeare was Hakluyt.<sup>43</sup> Leslie M. Oliver has ranked Actes and Monuments with the Bible and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress for its influence upon Protestant England.<sup>44</sup> Helen C. White shows that "the upper house of convocation of Canterbury in 1571" ordered "that a copy of the Bishops' Bible of 1568 and a copy of Foxe's book should be installed in every cathedral church, and every member of the hierarchy from archbishop down to resident canon should have a copy of the latter in the hall or dining room of his house for the use of all who came there."<sup>45</sup> But the book was promulgated even further than this order suggests, for, as White goes on to show, Foxe's Actes and Monuments "was chained beside the great Bible in many parish churches, and it was, with the Bible and the chronicles and histories, one of the books to be found in the offices of the Court of Elizabeth, and the Companies of London had to keep a copy

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<sup>43</sup>Quoted by Haller, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation, p. 13. Haller immediately points out, however, that Foxe's book had been in print for thirty years when, in 1589, Hakluyt's Principall Navigations Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation was published, and that, therefore, Foxe can be argued to have exerted the greater influence on Shakespeare's generation.

<sup>44</sup>Quoted by Helen C. White, Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs, p. 168. White expresses her concurrence with this estimation of Foxe's book.

<sup>45</sup>White, Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs, pp. 167-68.

in their halls."<sup>46</sup>

In form, Actes and Monuments is a history of the Christian Church. It concentrates largely upon the apostolic character of the Church, its direct link with the institution founded by Christ; hence, the use of the word "Actes" in the title, a verbal link with the Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament. Much of the book deals with the persecutions faced by the Church through the ages, and the narrative concentrates on the heroism of those who willingly suffered such persecutions to witness to the truth of their faith. But Foxe also devotes a great deal of space in Actes and Monuments to criticizing the Catholic Church as a corrupt body that has fallen away from the true Christian faith into pathways of greed, both for wealth and power, maintaining itself first by encouraging superstitious beliefs and practices among its adherents, and second, by persecuting all those who dare to dissent from the teachings of Rome and attempt to break away from the authority of the Pope and return the Church to its original status. Much space, of course, is devoted to retelling the story of Queen Mary's persecutions. Throughout, Foxe adumbrates the themes which most later anti-Catholic writers were to embrace. Because of this, Actes and Monuments is more than a history of the Church; it is a compendium of the Elizabethan attitude toward Roman Catholicism.

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<sup>46</sup>White, Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs, p. 168.

In the first pages of his book, Foxe attacks Catholicism for being a persecuting religion. In a proface "To the Persecutors of God's Truth, Commonly Called Papists," Foxe directly addresses Roman Catholics, telling them that they should:

. . . see and behold, I beseech you, here in this story, the pitiful slaughter of your butchery . . . . consider the number, almost out of number, of so many silly and simple lambs of Christ, whose blood you have sought and sucked; whose lives you have vexed; whose bodies you have slain, racked, and tormented . . . without mercy, without measure, without all sense of humanity! See, I say, and behold, here before your eyes, the heaps of slain bodies, of so many men and women, both old; young, children, infants, married, unmarried, wives, widows, maids, blind men, lame men, whole men; of all sorts, of all ages, of all degrees; lords, knights, gentlemen, lawyers, merchants, archbishops, bishops, priests, ministers, deacons, laymen, artificers, yea, whole households, whole kindreds together; father, mother, and daughter; grandmother, mother, aunt, and child, etc.; whose wounds yet bleeding before the face of God cry vengeance . . . . I exhort you, that with patience you would read and peruse the history of these your own acts and doings, being as no more ashamed now to read them, than you were then to do them; to the intent that, when you shall now the better revise what your doings have been, the more you may blush and detest the same.<sup>47</sup>

It is doubtful whether Actes and Monuments had this effect on any Roman Catholic readers which the book may have found in England. On the contrary, the first edition provoked a number of responses to which Foxe refers in the "Epistle Dedicatory" which he added to subsequent

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<sup>47</sup>Foxe, Actes and Monuments, I, xii-xiii.

editions of Actes and Monuments; here Foxe says of the response to his first edition that "Such blustering and striving was then against that poor book through all quarters of England, even to the gates of Louvain, so that no English Papist, almost, in all the realm, thought himself a perfect Catholic unless he had cast out some word or other to give that book a blow."<sup>48</sup>

Like many other Marian exiles, Foxe regarded the pope as the Antichrist, and, because of this, he believed that only the massed forces of Christian virtue, supporting a great Protestant leader, could resist and ultimately destroy the diabolic authority of the papacy. Most English Protestants saw such a leader in Queen Elizabeth. In part, Foxe wrote Actes and Monuments to demonstrate the necessity for royal supremacy in both the kingdom and the Church, as Helen White argues.<sup>49</sup> Thus, Foxe's glowing panegyric to the Queen in Actes and Monuments is more than mere flattery or, in Helen White's phrase, "patriotic idealization."<sup>50</sup> According to White, Foxe's treatment of the Queen "is the glorification of a unity of religious faith and of national feeling that gives a remarkable sense of moral security and simplicity."<sup>51</sup> In Foxe's

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<sup>48</sup>Foxe, Actes and Monuments, I, vi. We may note in passing that Foxe dedicated his book to Queen Elizabeth.

<sup>49</sup>White, Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs, p. 173.

<sup>50</sup>White, Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs, p. 141.

<sup>51</sup>White, Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs, p. 141.

Actes and Monuments the central apocalyptic myth of Elizabethan England takes shape: the belief that the ascension of Elizabeth to the throne represented the triumph of the Protestant cause in England and the defeat of the Antichristian forces which had captured England during the reign of Mary. This forceful Protestant Queen, it was believed, would ensure that England maintained her freedom from the usurping authority of the pope and the persecutions by Catholic monarchs, and would allow the English Church to regain the pure state of the original Church of Christ. Because of this general belief, a new, more potent significance must have been seen in the title which the Queen bore, Defensor Fidei.

In expressing his apocalyptic view of the future of England and her Church and the embodiment in Queen Elizabeth of this vision of England's greatness, Foxe was establishing a tradition which would be echoed repeatedly in Elizabethan literature. In reviewing what I have called "anti-Catholic" writings, we must bear in mind that there lay behind the propaganda and verbal abuse this positive, heroic vision of Elizabethan England, and that those who were attacking the Church of Rome were doing so on behalf of this grand, optimistic concept of the world that they wished to build.

For, although most theological treatises defending the Protestant position and attacking Catholicism remained always fairly reasonable and tended to concentrate on

philosophic issues and fine points of Scripture and doctrine, other anti-Catholic writings, addressed to a more general audience, tended to be full of savage personal attacks on the Catholic clergy, especially the hierarchy, and of bitterly satiric denunciations of Roman Catholic beliefs and practices. In these latter writings, especially those which followed the Queen's excommunication, anti-Catholic writers became particularly virulent. As Arnold Oskar Meyer tells us, after the excommunication, "No figure of speech was too coarse to serve as an insult, no mud too dirty to throw at the Catholic Church."<sup>52</sup> Yet even the authors of the most vicious and scurrilous assaults upon the Church of Rome subscribed to the positive vision of Protestant England that is expressed in Actes and Monuments. One might adapt the words of Foxe's "Epistle Dedicatory" and say that no English writer thought himself a perfect Protestant "unless he had cast out some word or other" to give the Catholic Church a blow.

It is worth examining a representative sampling of the many anti-Catholic writings published during Queen Elizabeth's reign in order to suggest the religious climate of Elizabethan literature and the variety of anti-Catholic material published.

An interesting poem, dating from 1562, is the

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<sup>52</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 85.

anonymous "A Complaint of the Churche, against the barbarous tyranny executed in Fraunce vpon her poor members."<sup>53</sup> This poem, which, according to J. Payne Collier, was printed but not apparently circulated nor listed in the Stationers' Register, is a lament, spoken by the Church, for the victims of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. In it, the pope is referred to as "That bastard bird of Rome," and Rome itself (or perhaps rather the Roman Church) as "that gaudy whore."<sup>54</sup> The persecution of Protestants in France is compared to that of the early Christians in pagan Rome; the poem ends with this prayer:

Graunt, heavenly Lorde, if they will be,  
 these acts of bloud may ceasse:  
 Confound thy foes, preserue thy Churche,  
 our Queen and realm in peace.<sup>55</sup>

What is most apparent here is the fact that the poem has so much in common with Actes and Monuments. For example, the author compares the modern church with that of the early years of the Christian era, and the Church of Rome with pagan Rome; he also attacks Rome as an illegitimate power and a persecutor of the true Church; finally, he emphasizes the idea that England, the Church and Queen Elizabeth are

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<sup>53</sup>Reprinted in J. Payne Collier, ed., Illustrations of Early English Popular Literature, I (New York, 1966). Hereafter, this work will be referred to as Collier, Illustrations. Each item reprinted by Collier in this collection has its own pagination.

<sup>54</sup>Collier, Illustrations, I, 14.

<sup>55</sup>Collier, Illustrations, I, 14.

under the direct protection of God.

Two other publications of the 1560's are worth mentioning together because they are responses to Roman Catholic polemicists. In 1562, Thomas Cooper, who later became Bishop first of Lincoln and then of Winchester, published a polemic, An Answer in Defense of the Truth Against the Private Mass,<sup>56</sup> in response to An Apology of Private Mass, which Cooper described as "An Anonymous Popish Treatise Against Bishop Jewel."<sup>57</sup> Cooper's An Answer in Defense is a reasoned theological response to an opponent; but what is remarkable about this book is that in its original printing the author also reprinted in its entirety the text of the Catholic treatise which he was refuting, a work which otherwise seems to have circulated only in manuscript. The other polemic to which I have referred is James Calfhill's An Answer to John Martiall's Treatise of the Cross, published in 1565.<sup>58</sup> Like Cooper's An Answer in Defense, Calfhill's Treatise was a reasoned, fair-minded response evidently conceived as an episode in an open debate on a theological subject.

<sup>56</sup>William Goode, ed., An Answer in Defense of the Truth Against the Apology of Private Mass by T. Cooper, Parker Society Publications, Vol. 12 (New York, 1968).

<sup>57</sup>Goode, An Answer in Defense of the Truth Against the Apology of Private Mass by T. Cooper, p. iii.

<sup>58</sup>Richard Gibbings, ed., An Answer to John Martiall's Treatise of the Cross by James Calfhill, D.D. Parker Society Publications, Vol. 11. (New York, 1968).

One of the earliest attacks on the Church of Rome after the Queen's excommunication was Thomas Knell's "A Piththy Note to Papists," published in 1570.<sup>59</sup> This poem comments on the brief career of John Felton, a Catholic to whom the Church had assigned the unenviable duty of appending a copy of the papal bull of excommunication to the door of the palace of the Bishop of London. Condemned and executed for treason, he was regarded by Roman Catholics as a martyr. "A Piththy Note for Papists" argues, amid much scurrility, that Felton had acted out of political, rather than religious, motives. Knell describes the pope as Felton's "deer god"<sup>60</sup> and compares Felton himself to a number of Old Testament figures, all traitors to Jerusalem.<sup>61</sup> The poem ends with a warning to Roman Catholics:

Beware, ye papists, and take heed,  
 I read you yet beware,  
 And cast all Popery from your harts,  
 take heed of hellish rore:  
 And if you will not yet be true  
 to God and our good Queen,  
 I pray to God that all your endes  
 as Feltons may be seen.  
 And God save Queen Elizabeth  
 from Papists wil and power,  
 That sharpned sword by Gospelles force  
 may all her Foes deuoure.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Collier, Illustrations, I.

<sup>60</sup> Collier, Illustrations, I, 4.

<sup>61</sup> Collier, Illustrations, I, 8.

<sup>62</sup> Collier, Illustrations, I, 20.

This is actually much closer in spirit to Foxe's Actes and Monuments than were the theological disputations cited above; but the tone here is different from that of Foxe, more pugnacious and bloodthirsty. All the same, Foxe's confidence and optimism may be seen behind the swaggering tone of Knell's "Piththy Note."

Many other satiric and vituperative publications were prompted by the Pope's bull of excommunication. As Arnold O. Meyer tells us: "Popular writers never wearied of making merry over the similarity of bull in English and bullae in Latin. The broad taste of the period found delight in drawing extraordinary comparisons between bellowing bulls and excommunicating bulls; the more fastidious taste of literary euphuists composed Latin verses about bursting bubbles (bullae). Nor was there any lack of ribaldry."<sup>63</sup> As an example of "the broad taste," Meyer cites an anonymous work entitled A disclosing of the great Bull and certain calves that he hath gotten and specially the Monster Bull that roared at my Lord Bishop's gate, which was published in London.<sup>64</sup> As an example of "The more fastidious taste," Meyer cites A Confutation of the Pope's Bull, written by Henry Bullinger and published in

<sup>63</sup> Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, pp. 84-5.

<sup>64</sup> Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 84n. Meyer says that "the Monster Bull" refers to John Felton.

London in 1572.<sup>65</sup>

Another piece of verse published in 1570 was "A ballad reioysinge the sodaine fall, Of rebels that thought to deuower us all," which relates a biased account of the rebellion of the Earls of Westmoreland and Northumberland in November, 1569.<sup>66</sup> This short-lived uprising was the last attempt by English Catholics to change the anti-Catholic, anti-Spanish policies of the government; the failure of this movement served to strengthen the government's position and thereby to assure Elizabeth's hold on the throne against Mary Stuart, and to assure the hold of Protestantism on England.<sup>67</sup>

The ballad itself denounces the earls for having wished to return England to the state "That it before hath ben," a reference to the reign of Queen Mary with "The Popish Masse . . . / With her abuses vaine." Other

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<sup>65</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 85n. Despite a fortunate coincidence, the author's name is not a pun: Henry Bullinger (1504-1574), minister of the Church of Zurich, was a well-known preacher. The Decades of Henry Bullinger, edited by Thomas Harding, were published as volumes 6-10 of the Parker Society's publications (New York, 1968).

<sup>66</sup>"A ballad reioysinge . . ." (London, 1570). The twenty-nine unnumbered stanzas of this ballad were printed in two columns on one side of a large sheet.

<sup>67</sup>Wernham, "The British Question, 1559-69," p. 233.

accusations are made against the rebels: that they "did  
 'rent and teare" Bibles; that "They seek to haue abolished/  
 By force of warre and sworde" the laws that Queen Elizabeth  
 had established; that they seek

. . . to helpe the Pope  
 His honour lost to winne,  
 In whom they put their faith and hope,  
 To pardon all their sinne.

The poem accuses the earls of having attempted to pollute  
 England with "aulters and tradicions olde," with "Pardons  
 and Masses" and with "Kerye leyson," and to bring back the  
 friars, the monks and private confessions, all of which  
 were condemned as Roman corruptions and, as the ballad  
 calls them, "vaneties."

The poem goes on to compare the fall of the rebels  
 with the downfall of a number of figures from the Old  
 Testament, including the Israelites who built the golden  
 calf, Senecherib, and Hollifernus. The message is clear  
 that the rebels, like those of Old Testament times, were  
 cast down by the hand of God. The ballad ends with the  
 anonymous author calling upon his readers to pray to God,

Our noble Queene to send  
 A Prosperous Raigne both night and day,  
 From her foes to defend.

Her and her Counsaile, Realme and all  
 During her noble life:  
 And that ill hap may them befall,  
 That seek for Warre and strife.

Perhaps the principal importance of this ballad is  
 its emphasis, while gloating over the enemies' fall, upon  
 the absolute optimism and certitude enjoyed by those who,

like Foxe, subscribed to what I have called the apocalyptic vision of the Elizabethan age. Implied here too, in the Biblical comparison, is the status of English Protestants as a chosen people directly linked, through the primitive Christian Church, to those Israelites such as Moses who always remained faithful to God's word.

Also belonging to the year 1570 is A Marvellous History entitled, Beware the Cat, attributed to William Baldwin, one of the authors of A Mirror for Magistrates. Muriel C. Bradbrooke has described this work as a "ribald collection of witch stories about Irish cats -- by turns horrific and bawdy . . . with a strong anti-Papal bias . . . ." <sup>68</sup> What makes Beware the Cat interesting is that it seems to be one of the earliest Elizabethan literary works in which the anti-Roman Catholic bias is only incidental to the main body of the work.

Another book published in the 1570's was a quasi-historical work, John Bale's The pageant of popes, contayninge the lyues of all the bishops of Rome, from the beginnige to 1555 Devided into iii sortes, bishops, archbishops, and popes, whereof the two first are contayned in two bookes, and the third part in fiue. In the Which is manifestlye shewed the beginning of Antichriste and

<sup>68</sup>Muriel C. Bradbrook, "Beasts and Gods: Greene's Groats-Worth of Witte and the Social Purpose of Venus and Adonis," Shakespeare Survey, 15 (1962), p. 64.

increasing to his fulnesse, accordinge to the propheeye of  
John in the Apocalips Shewing manye straunge, notorious,  
outragious and tragicall partes, played by them the like  
whereof hath not els bin hearde: both pleasant and  
profitable for this age.<sup>69</sup>

This book was written in Latin by John Bale, evidently in 1555; the edition published in 1574 is described as having been "Englished with sondryc additions" by John Studley. This edition is dedicated to the Earl of Sussex, a member of the Queen's Privy Council. Once again, we have the view of Rome proposed by John Foxe, with the Pope described as the Anti-Christ. The original author, John Bale, Bishop of Ossory (1495-1563), is best known today as a playwright, and it is in that capacity that I will speak of him at greater length in the next chapter. But it is worth mentioning here that Bale was another exile from England during Queen Mary's reign and that he was in fact a close friend of John Foxe.<sup>70</sup>

Obviously, this translation, revision and republication of a nineteen-year-old historical study, eleven years after the death of Bale, was intended to contribute to the public's anti-papal sentiments following

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<sup>69</sup> John Bale, The pageant of popes . . . (London, 1574).

<sup>70</sup> William Haller points out that Bale, in his Scriptorum Illustrium . . . Catalogus (1557-9), described Foxe as having been "for ten years his faithful Achates." Haller, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation, p. 56.

the Pope's excommunicating Queen Elizabeth. In the "Epistle Dedicatory," John Studley attacks the Pope for having sought to stir up rebellion against the Queen, asking what enemy of England but the Pope "hath made such greedy spoyle and wrought such broyle in any countrey as he and his hath done continuallye in this little Isle . . . almost in every kings time since ye conquest . . . ." <sup>71</sup> Studley goes on to mention examples of English kings who had been troubled by popes, including King John, Richard I, and the first three Henrys. He says that "because his staffe here hath bin broken & [sic] he throwen out of ye doores in this our time," the Pope has increased his efforts against the Queen, seeking by any means to overthrow her and re-establish his own power in England, for "Such is the purpose of Antichrist against us, . . . practised with colour of holiness." <sup>72</sup>

The pageant of popes is related to Foxe's Actes and Monuments inasmuch as it attempts to provide a gigantic cosmic view of Christian history. But where Foxe concentrates on telling the story primarily from the point of view of the development of the Church in England, Bale concentrates on the development of the papacy, showing the ever-present corruption of the popes and the machinations and secret

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<sup>71</sup>Bale, The pageant of popes, Sig. Bi<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>72</sup>Bale, The pageant of popes, Sig. Bi<sup>r</sup> . - Sig. Bi<sup>v</sup>.

bargains by which they attained the papal crown. The two books are complementary in their view of the English and Roman Churches, Bale depicting the internal corruption and immorality that allowed the cruelty and persecutions shown by Foxe. It may be that the importance of Bale's The pageant of popes in the Elizabethan view of religious history was only fully realized in 1570, fifteen years after its composition, when Englishmen had fully absorbed the Elizabethan myth formulated by Foxe.

In the 1580's, as we have seen, the government was passing ever sterner laws to combat the influence of the Roman Catholic Church; at the same time, the stream of anti-Catholic writings published in England continued to flow. In part, all of this was due to the increasing number of Catholic priests sent into England, first from Douai and, after 1580, from Rome, as missionaries to the English people.<sup>73</sup> As we shall see, these Catholic missions prompted a number of anti-Catholic publications.

In 1580, William Fulke, D.D., Master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, published several tracts of some interest; two of these were published together under the title, I. Stapleton and Martiall (two Popish Heretikes) confuted, and of their particular heresies detected; the third treatise, published separately, was A Discoverie of the

<sup>73</sup>Meyer, England and the Catholic Church Under Queen Elizabeth, p. 128.

Davngerovs Rocke of the Popish Church, commended by

Nicholas Sanders.<sup>74</sup> Each of these treatises is a point-by-point refutation, on theological and scriptural grounds, of previous publications by Roman Catholic authors.

Although Fulke's responses are cast in the form of serious theological disputations, their author employs an abusive tone when speaking of his opponents which we would not think usual in formal debate. For example, Fulke says of John Martiall that he was "more like a wrangling petty-fogger in the Law than a sober student in Divinity," and that Martiall "doth in a manner nothing else but cavil, quarrel and scold."<sup>75</sup> Addressing himself to another opponent, Nicholas Sanders, Fulke says, ". . . your distinction of Eternal and Temporal, Universal and Militant, which is the foundation of all your rotten Rock, is an impudent and blasphemous falsehood . . . it is in vain to contend, when your Rock is nothing else but an heap of sand and dung, whereon your papish Church is builded."<sup>76</sup>

These are hardly the words of a debater who can be said to

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<sup>74</sup>Richard Gibbings, ed., Fulke's Answers to Stapleton, Martiall, and Sanders. Parker Society Publications, Vol. 18, (New York, 1968).

<sup>75</sup>Gibbings, Fulke's Answers to Stapleton, Martiall, and Sanders, p. 125.

<sup>76</sup>Gibbings, Fulke's Answers to Stapleton, Martiall, and Sanders, p. 215.

have any respect for either his opponent or ~~his~~ opponent's opinions. This abusive tone becomes increasingly typical of most of the anti-Catholic writings of the 1580's.

In the following year, Thomas Lupton published A Persuasion from papistrie: wrytten chiefly to the obstinate, determined, and dysobedient English papists, who are herein named and proued English enimies and extreme enimies to Englande, Which persuasion, all the Queenes Maiesties Subiectes, fauring the Pope or his religion, will reade or heare aduisedlye and throughly, especially such as woulde be counted friendes to Englande, that wishe our Princes prosperitie, the safegarde of the Nobilitie, the concorde of our Comunalty, and the continuance of this our happy state and tranquillitie.<sup>77</sup> Dedicated to the

Queen herself, A Persuasion from papistrie, is a well-reasoned attack on the Catholics from the point of view of the inherent contradiction which Lupton perceived in one who claimed allegiance to both the English crown and the Roman Church. Here, Lupton is respectful toward his opposition, despite the fact that the avowed purpose of his treatise is to demonstrate the opponent's--perhaps unintentional--treason to the Queen. The final words of the Persuasion signify Lupton's intention to pray for the

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<sup>77</sup>Thomas Lupton, A Persuasion from papistrie . . . (London, 1581).

conversion of the English Catholics.<sup>78</sup>

One of the Jesuit missionaries, Robert Parsons, wrote and published a response to Thomas Lupton's A Persuasion from papistrie; to this, Lupton responded with a work bearing this title: The Christian againste the Iesuite, Wherein the writer of a pernicious booke, intituled A discouerie of I. Nichols, privily printed, couertly cast abroad, and secretely solde is not only iustly reprooued: but also a booke called A persuasion from papistrie, therein derided and falsified, is defended by Thomas Lupton, the authour thereof.<sup>79</sup> This work is ironic in tone and satiric in intent, although the overall goal is a serious refutation of the arguments advanced by Parsons.

Many works were published dealing with the punishment of Catholics accused of treason, especially of Catholic priests. I have already mentioned one such pamphlet, Anthony Munday's A breefe and true reporte, of the Execution of certayne Traytours at Tiburne, the xxviii and xxx dayes of Maye, 1582, which describes the death by hanging of a number of priests condemned to death for their religious activities. Here, Munday describes the last moments of these victims, telling of their

<sup>78</sup>Lupton, A Persuasion from papistrie . . . , p. 316.

<sup>79</sup>Thomas Lupton, The Christian againste the Iesuite . . . (London, 1582). Lupton dedicates this book to Sir Francis Walsingham.

debating theology on the gallows with those Protestant clergymen who had been assigned to try to educe last-minute recantations from them; he also describes the anger of the crowd at the supposed superstitions and blasphemies of the priests, as well as the vexation of the sheriff at hearing them praying in Latin. The purpose of such a pamphlet was evidently to demonstrate the stubbornness in error of the accused traitors, as well as to suggest the unity of the church, the law, represented by the sheriff, and the populace in opposing the Church of Rome.

Another such work was George Whetstone's The Censure of a loyall Subject: Vpon certaine noted Speech and behaviours of those fourteene notable Traitors, at the place of their executions, the xx and xxi of September last past. Wherein is handled matter of necessarye instruction to all dutifull Subiectes: especially, the multitude of ignorant people, published in London in 1587.<sup>80</sup> This is a fairly long description of, and commentary on, the public executions of fourteen Catholics accused of conspiring against the life of Queen Elizabeth. Written in dialogue form, The Censure of a loyall Subject discourses on the treachery of the papists and the plottings of the pope and of the Jesuits. It is worth

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<sup>80</sup> Collier, Illustrations of Early English Popular Literature, I.

emphasizing that, through such publications as this, the Elizabethan public was reminded of the consequences of loyalties to the Catholic Church. Thus, the English people were exposed first to reasoned arguments in favor of the Protestant position; next to verbal abuse of the Catholic party; and finally, to the threat of dire punishment for adherence to the Catholic position.

After the defeat of the Spanish Armada, however, English authors felt the nation and the Church to be in a stronger political and military position than before; but rather than abating the flow of anti-Catholic writing, this position of strength encouraged English writers to produce more purely abusive and satirical attacks upon the Church of Rome.

In 1589, for example, Robert Greene published a satiric pamphlet that is typical of the then dominant abusive approach to the treatment of Catholics. The Spanish Masquerado is described by its author as "a pleasant devise" under which "is discovered . . . in certaine breefe Sentences and Mottos, the pride and insolence of the Spanish estate: with the disgrace conceiued by their losse, and the dismaied confusion of their troubled thoughtes."<sup>81</sup> In form, The Spanish

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<sup>81</sup> Alexander B. Grosart, ed., The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene, Vol. V, pp. 235-88. (New York, 1964). Hereafter, this edition will be cited as Grosart, Works of Robert Greene. It is worth mentioning here that Greene had at one time had as his patron the Earl of Leicester to whom he dedicated the non-polemical prose fantasy Planetomachia in 1585.

Masquerado seems to be the scheme for a pageant in which Greene describes a dozen emblematic tableaux depicting various aspects of Spain's consternation and confusion after the defeat of the Armada. Each tableau is followed by a "Glossa" in which Greene explains the scene's significance.

Besides being an attack on a defeated foreign enemy, The Spanish Masquerado contains a great deal of anti-Catholic satire. The first tableau depicts the Pope "having put off his triple Crowne, and his Pontificalibus, sitting malecontented, scratching of his head, throwing away his keies and his sword, in great choller . . . ." <sup>82</sup> Elsewhere, Greene depicts "The Cardinalls of Rome . . . appareled like Mourners" because of the Armada's defeat. <sup>83</sup> But, as Greene describes the scene, not all the Catholic clergy were enough upset by the defeat to let it interfere with their personal pleasures; for, he depicts, "The rest of the rascall Rable of the Romish Church, as Monkes, friers, and dirging Priests . . . sitting banquetting with the faire Nunnes, having store of daintie Cates and wines before them, stall-fed with ease, and gluttony . . . ." <sup>84</sup>

At this point, we are aware of the fact that Greene was

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<sup>82</sup>Grosart, Works of Robert Greene, V, 247.

<sup>83</sup>Grosart, Works of Robert Greene, V, 259.

<sup>84</sup>Grosart, Works of Robert Greene, V, 265.

a dramatist and that his Spanish Masquerado, straddling the gap between dramatic and non-dramatic literature, is influenced by anti-Catholic conventions of the theatre.

Another of Greene's non-dramatic works which contains an anti-Catholic passage is A Maiden's Dream Vpon the Death of the right Honorable Sir Christopher Hatton, Knight, late Lord Chancellor of England, a long poem published in 1591.<sup>85</sup> Here, speaking of the late Lord Chancellor's religion, Greene describes Sir Christopher thus:

Ne was his faith in mens traditions,  
He hated Antichrist and all his trash;  
He was not led away with superstitions,  
Nor was he in religion over-rash;  
His hands from heresie he loud to wash.

(ll. 289-293)

Here, Greene is commending the late Sir Christopher for his firmness in opposing the Catholic Church. The reference to being "over-rash," it is true, may also refer to Hatton's opposition to Puritanism. It seems from this passage, as from another, earlier in the poem --

His faith was not in ceremonies old,  
Nor had he new-found toys within his head . . .

(ll. 276-277)

-- that Hatton was opposed to both Catholic and Puritan extremes of sixteenth century Christianity,<sup>86</sup> and that

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<sup>85</sup>Grosart, Works of Robert Greene, XIV, 293-317. Line references to this edition will be given parenthetically after quotations in the text.

<sup>86</sup>According to the Dictionary of National Biography, Hatton was thought at some time in his career to have

Greene seems to approve this view, although on balance it would seem that the poem, and Greene's other works, are more anti-Catholic than they are anti-Puritan. But of course Greene, a practical man, must have realized that the Puritans carried far more political weight in his time than did the Roman Catholics.

Another playwright who contributed to the Anti-Catholic literature of the post-Armada period was George Peele. In 1589, for example, Peele published A Farewell: Entituled to the famous and fortunate Generalls of our English forces: Sir Iohn Norris & Syr Frauncis Drake Knights, and all theyr braue and resolute followers.

Whercunto is annexed: A tale of Troy.<sup>87</sup> The farewell is a long topical poem, written to celebrate the departure of an English fleet for Portugal to support the claim of

\_\_\_\_\_ favored the Catholics. Judging by the facts of his career as outlined in the D.N.B., however, it is difficult to see how anyone could have seriously entertained this belief. Hatton, an intimate friend of the Queen, and patron of many poets including Spenser, was vigorous in his defense of the English state and Church, was largely responsible for the passage of the 1584 bill "against Jesuits and seminary priests", and brought a charge of treason against the only member of Parliament who opposed this bill. Hatton also prosecuted Anthony Babington and others for their conspiracy in favor of Mary Stuart and seems to have been one of those who pressed for the execution of the Scottish Queen. See Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, eds., Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1891), XXV, 159-162.

<sup>87</sup>A. H. Bullen, ed., The Works of George Peele (Port Washington, N. Y., 1966), II, 233-265. Line references to this edition will be given parenthetically in the text.

Elizabeth's candidate for the Portuguese throne.<sup>88</sup> In the Farewell, Peele depicts the commanders of this expedition, Norris and Drake, as venturing forth, "Under the sanguine cross, brave England's badge, / To propagate religious piety . . ." (ll. 25-26). Shortly thereafter, Peele describes the fleet,

. . . branching forth  
 Even to the gulf that leads to lofty Rome;  
 There to deface the pride of Antichrist,  
 And pull his paper walls and popery down, --  
 A famous enterprise for England's strength,  
 To steel your swords on Avarice' triple crown,  
 And cleanse augeas' stalls in Italy.

(ll. 33-39)

These passages seem to represent the development that English anti-Catholicism experienced after the defeat of the Armada. Now it was possible for Englishmen to think themselves capable of carrying the fight against Roman Catholicism outside their own country. Now that England seemed at last truly to "rule the waves," English Protestants could even seriously consider the possibility, as Peele suggests, of waging war against the Pope himself.

A short time later in his career, in 1591, Peele represented the degradation of Roman Catholicism in his Descensus Astraeae, which is described on its title page

<sup>88</sup> According to Bullen, this venture proved disastrous. The Works of George Peele, II, p. 235. The Tale of Troy printed with the Farewell, is, according to Peele, "an old poem of mine own, . . . a pleasant discourse, fitly serving to recreate by the reading the chivalry of England . . ." Bullen, The Works of George Peele, II, p. 236.

as "The Device of a Pageant." Here, the figure of Superstition is depicted as "A friar, sitting by the fountain," while Ignorance is "a priest."<sup>89</sup> Superstition asks Ignorance to help place a curse upon the waters of the spring which apparently feeds the fountain, by using his rosary. Superstition says, "Stir, priest, and with thy beads poison this spring; I tell thee all is baneful that I bring" (ll. 60-61).

Ignorance answers him thus:

It is in vain: her eye keeps me in awe,  
Whose heart is purely fixed on the law,  
The holy law; and bootless we contend,  
While this chaste nymph this fountain doth defend.

(ll. 62-65)

Within the allegory of the pageant, the spring represents England, the poisoning of the spring represents the danger of pollution by a superstitious, false religion, and the "chaste nymph" is obviously Queen Elizabeth. Because Roman Catholicism seemed no longer to be the threat it once had been, Peele apparently felt safe in depicting the Church of Rome symbolically as a pair of envious, impotent intriguers, desirous of acting against Elizabeth, but powerless to do so. After Spain's ignominious defeat at sea, Peele seems to say, England no longer needed to take seriously the now empty words of the Catholic Church.

The image of Elizabeth as a "chaste nymph,"

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<sup>89</sup>Bullen, The Works of George Peele, I, 359-368.

protecting the purity of her territory as depicted in Peelo's Descensus Astraeae, was a fairly conventional one; but it reached its definitive form in the great unfinished Elizabethan epic, The Faerie Queene by Edmund Spenser.<sup>90</sup> Far from being a piece of propaganda, this is truly the poetic expression of the vision of Protestant England propounded by John Foxe in Actes and Monuments. Sharing as it does Foxe's vision, The Faerie Queene contains a great deal of anti-Catholic material, but the overall design of the poem expresses primarily the positive aspects of Foxe's vision of the purification of England. In Spenser's poem, this purification is to be achieved through the virtues of the Faerie Queene Gloriana, who allegorically represents Elizabeth. The Queen's virtues are personified as those knights who go forth to battle the powers of evil, which are generally allegorical representations of Catholic clergymen, institutions or practices. Gloriana's knights are depicted as the means by which the Faerie kingdom of England will be cleansed and returned to its original state or purity. If completed, The Faerie Queene might easily have carried as its subtitle the words "Paradise Regained," for this is precisely the goal which Gloriana and her

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<sup>90</sup> Edwin Greenlaw, et al., eds., The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition, 11 vols. (Baltimore, 1932-1945). The first three books of The Faerie Queene were published in 1590; these were reprinted with books four through six in 1596. Two cantos of a supposed seventh book were published in 1609, ten years after Spenser's death.

knights and ladies are seeking throughout the massive fragment of the poem as it now exists.

For a few examples of Spenser's attacks on Roman Catholicism, we might examine some of the interpretations of his allegory suggested by the great Spenser scholar Frederick Morgan Padelford in his study of the first book of The Faerie Queene.<sup>91</sup> According to Padelford, the witch Duessa represents "the doctrine and worldly practices of Rome."<sup>92</sup> Spenser depicts her, says Padelford, "arrayed in purple and gold, thus symbolizing the gorgeous ecclesiastical garments and the rich deckings of the Church of Rome, as well as her bloodguiltiness."<sup>93</sup> But Duessa, he says, may at times also represent the Catholic Mary Stuart, depending on the particular actions in which she is taking part.<sup>94</sup> Padelford identifies the Blatant Beast as "the universal Antichrist -- the countries and people who were under the domination of Rome."<sup>95</sup> Finally, he interprets Orgoglio as "the power of Rome," and says that

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<sup>91</sup> Frederick Morgan Padelford, The Political and Ecclesiastical Allegory of the First Book of The Faerie Queene (New York, 1911).

<sup>92</sup> Padelford, The Political and Ecclesiastical Allegory of the First Book of The Faerie Queene, p. 46.

<sup>93</sup> Padelford, The Political and Ecclesiastical Allegory of the First Book of The Faerie Queene, p. 43.

<sup>94</sup> Padelford, The Political and Ecclesiastical Allegory of the First Book of The Faerie Queene, p. 58.

<sup>95</sup> Padelford, The Political and Ecclesiastical Allegory of the First Book of The Faerie Queene, p. 46.

"The conflict with Orgoglio is the allegorical story of the struggle against Roman Catholicism" from 1539 to "the passage of the Acts of Uniformity and Supremacy under Elizabeth in 1559 . . . ." <sup>96</sup>

In examining some of Padelford's interpretations of Spenser's allegory, we must remember that these are only a few examples from only one book of The Faerie Queene. Many other examples of anti-Catholic allegory could be selected from the other five books. It must also be emphasized that there is a great deal more to Spenser's epic than an attack on Roman Catholicism. Spenser's allegory is multi-faceted and contains symbolic commentaries on politics, current events and ideas, prominent persons, and other subjects as well. It also draws much material from classical mythology and from the British folk tradition. Thus, while The Faerie Queene contains much anti-Catholic allegory, this is by no means the primary focus of the poem; rather it is only one important element in a vast pattern. <sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Padelford, The Political and Ecclesiastical Allegory of the First Book of The Faerie Queene, p. 46.

<sup>97</sup> Elsewhere, it is worth noting, Spenser more specifically criticized the Catholic Church. In A View of the Present State of Ireland, written probably in 1596 but not published until 1633, Spenser attacks the "sinne" and "ignorance" of the Catholic clergy in Ireland and says that most Irish Catholics know nothing of their religion except the rote repetition of prayers. Greenlaw, et al., The Works of Edmund Spenser: A Variorum Edition, X, pp. 136-138.

From our survey of the English government's policies against the Roman Catholic Church, it is clear that the Protestant-Catholic struggle was as much political as theological. The Queen's government reacted strongly against the Church of Rome and its policies because it believed that Rome was attempting to overthrow Queen Elizabeth and replace her with a Catholic monarch who would allow the papacy to have greater power in England. The Queen and her loyal subjects reacted as they did to the Bull of excommunication not because they wished Elizabeth to be considered still a faithful member of the Catholic Church, but because the bull was seen as an attempt to relieve English Catholics of their allegiance to the Queen and to justify foreign powers in their attempts to remove her from the throne.

Our random sampling of anti-Catholic writings from the Elizabethan age shows that the climate of opinion was firmly, even fanatically, opposed to the Church of Rome and all its institutions, beliefs and practices. Members of the Catholic Church were regarded as fair game for any satirist or pamphleteer who could get his writings printed. Many such works, but far from all of them, were produced with the sponsorship of patrons at court who were consciously carrying on a propaganda war; the evidence shows, however, that anti-Catholic publications were in keeping with the popular taste of the day.

We may now turn to the theatre, arguably the best reflection of Elizabethan popular taste, to see how the anti-Catholic climate of opinion affected the Elizabethan drama.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ANTI-CATHOLIC ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

"On 20 July 1586," according to E. K. Chambers, the Venetian ambassador in Spain sent home word of the resentment of Philip II of Spain at "the masquerades and comedies which the Queen of England orders to be acted at his expense." The ambassador wrote that, "His majesty has received a summary of one of these which was lately represented, in which all sorts of evil is spoken of the Pope, the Catholic religion, and the King, who is accused of spending all his time in the Escorial with the monks of St. Jerome, attending only to his buildings, and a hundred other insolences, which I refrain from sending to your Serenity."<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to guess which play might have so displeased the King of Spain, for by 1586 there had been performed in England a great many plays which might have fit the greater part of this description. The Tudor anti-Catholic movement was intensely active in the theatre where, evidently, it was felt that the anti-Catholic message could be brought to the greatest number of people, including the numerous commoners who were unable to read the tracts and

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<sup>1</sup>Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, I, p. 323.

pamphlets which we have already examined.

So far, in describing the anti-Catholic environment in which Christopher Marlowe lived, we have surveyed the political and legal aspects of Elizabethan anti-Catholicism and examined a sampling of the anti-papal publications by which he might have been influenced. But, because Marlowe was primarily a dramatist and the evidence of anti-Catholicism must be found, if anywhere, in his plays, we ought now to look at the drama of the Tudor period to find in what ways the Elizabethan anti-Catholic spirit found expression on the stage.<sup>2</sup>

In selecting plays to discuss here, I have chosen those which contain critical or unflattering portrayals, from a distinctly Protestant point of view, of the Roman

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<sup>2</sup>After the research and preliminary drafts of this chapter were completed, I was able to obtain a copy of an interesting monograph on this subject: Ranier Pineas, Tudor and Early Stuart Anti-Catholic Drama (Nieuwkoop, The Netherlands, 1972). Here, Pineas covers much of the same ground that I do in this chapter, although he takes a broader view of the subject, examining plays from the Jacobean period, to some of which I only refer briefly at the end of this chapter. The only play of the Tudor period which he covers that I have omitted is Lindsay's Satire of the Three Estates; this I have left out because its influence on the English drama is dubious. I have, however, examined a number of plays in this and the following chapter which are not discussed by Pineas. I will discuss Pineas' interpretation of the anti-Catholic dramatic movement in my closing chapter.

Another excellent book which touches upon the treatment of Catholicism on the Tudor stage is David Bevington's Tudor Drama and Politics: A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning (Cambridge, Mass., 1968).

Catholic Church or its adherents and which might have contributed to Marlowe's formation as a dramatist in the public theatres. Some of these plays, therefore, date from long before Marlowe's birth but are here included because of their general importance and influence on subsequent dramatists. I have omitted university plays and plays not written in English as not being directly relevant to the development of the popular Elizabethan drama.<sup>3</sup> For the most part, the plays I have chosen to discuss were publicly acted during Marlowe's lifetime or might have been available to him in printed versions: I have included a number of plays which, although first printed after Marlowe's death, almost certainly were acted during his lifetime. No attempt has been made to adhere to a strict chronological order in discussing these plays because of the uncertainty as to exactly when many of them were written or performed. Instead, I have grouped plays according to the probable decades of their origin, although in some cases I have treated plays of similar style or content together.

Anti-Catholicism on the Tudor stage was manifest

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<sup>3</sup>Unfortunately, this rule has necessitated the omission of such interesting Latin plays as Christus Triumphans by John Foxe. This play, together with an earlier Latin comedy by Foxe, an imitation of Terence, has been published by John Hazel Smith, ed., in Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe, the Martyrologist: Titus et Gesippus; Christus Triumphans (Ithaca, N.Y., 1973).

in two types of plays: those polemical works whose primary concern was with matters of topical interest and whose central focus was on some political or religious controversy; and those more purely literary works whose primary concentration was not on political or religious subjects, but which contained incidental criticism, mockery or derision of the Catholic Church. Although not all the dramatic works of the Tudor age were shaped solely by their authors' religious and political views, there are sufficient examples of plays to demonstrate first that anti-Catholicism was a theme of great apparent popular appeal, especially during the two decades immediately preceding Marlowe's career; and, second, that the frequent employment of this theme, beginning in the period immediately following England's break away from the Church of Rome, created a habit of mind among both playwrights and audiences which allowed anti-Catholicism to flourish in the theatre as a dramatic convention. The characteristics of this convention were these: a dramatic point of view strongly critical of the Roman Catholic Church and everything associated with it; a concern with the expression of Protestant doctrines, especially in those plays of the early years of the Reformation, as a corrective to what were considered the heresies of the Roman Catholic Church; and ad hominem attacks upon prominent Catholics.

At first, attacks on Roman Catholicism in Tudor drama centered upon questions of doctrine and scriptural

interpretation. Many of the early plays, as we shall see, were as much theological disquisitions as they were theatrical entertainments. The issue that most often arose in these controversial dramas was the question of the authority of the Pope over the English Church, especially in the way that this authority affected the power of the Crown, and the question of the tithes that had been paid by England to the Pope.

Very soon, however, the English drama ceased merely to debate theological questions and problems of the relation between church and state and began to attack and deride Roman Catholicism per se. One of the frequent attacks on Catholics is the accusation of superstition, especially regarding Catholic devotions to saints and the Blessed Virgin, and the use of Latin prayers in Catholic ritual. Related to the charge of superstition was the attack on Catholics over the issue of the sale of indulgences and payments for masses. Still another charge against the Church was the familiar one that the Roman Catholic clergy were ignorant, hypocritical and lecherous. Finally, a very frequent charge against the Roman Catholics, and one which is easily overlooked by readers of the Tudor drama, was that of irreverence and blasphemy, in that Catholics, as depicted by shocked Protestant dramatists, seem addicted to swearing oaths casually, not only by God's name, but by the names of saints, by the mass, by the wounds, body

and blood of Christ, and by all manner of objects, both sacred and profane.<sup>4</sup> All of these charges are based ultimately upon matters of doctrine and Scriptural interpretation. Attacks upon Catholicism for theological reasons became so common and so familiar that even when the dramatists turned from writing polemical dramas to more purely literary plays, they maintained the anti-Catholic spirit as a dramatic convention that gave them an easy means of defining an evil character as a villain in the eyes of the audience. The Catholic, once identified as such on the stage, seems to have become as much a conventional villain as was the Jew in the Elizabethan drama.

It is possible to trace the roots of Tudor anti-Catholic drama to the occasional anti-clericalism of such

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<sup>4</sup>To understand the seriousness of this charge, we must consult Alexander Nowell's Catechism, published in 1570. Nowell declares that it is not "lawful to swear by the names of saints, or by the names of other men or creatures" because "since a lawful oath is nothing else but the swearer's religious affirming that he calleth and useth God, the knower and judge of all things, for witness that he sweareth a true oath, and that he calleth upon and wisheth the same God to be the punisher and avenger of his lying and offence if he swear falsely; it were a most heinous sin to part or communicate among other persons or creatures this honour of God's wisdom and majesty, which is his own proper and peculiar honour." G. E. Corrie, ed., A Catechism Written in Latin by Alexander Nowell, Dean of St. Paul's: Together With The Same Catechism Translated into English by Thomas Norton. Appended is a sermon preached by Dean Nowell before Queen Elizabeth at the opening of the Parliament which met January 11, 1563. Parker Society Publications, Vol. 32 (New York, 1968) p. 128. Both the Latin and English versions were published in London in 1570. Hereafter, this edition will be referred to as Nowell's Catechism.

playwrights as John Heywood in such plays as John, Tib and Sir John, The Pardoner and the Friar, or The Four P's.<sup>5</sup>

But Heywood, in depicting lecherous priests or corrupt pardoners, is attacking abuses by individual churchmen, rather than the Church as institution. In this way, Heywood is acting, as did Chaucer and Skelton in their poems, as a critic of the clergy rather than as a reformer of the Church at large.<sup>6</sup> Although it is possible to argue that the presentation of anti-clerical material, such as the plays that I have mentioned, made the anti-Catholic drama that much more possible, Heywood does not belong to the anti-Catholic dramatic tradition which truly begins with the Protestant morality plays that appeared after the English Reformation.

The first, and in some ways most important, English author of Protestant morality drama in the sixteenth century was John Bale, Bishop of Ossory.<sup>7</sup> Bale, according to E. K. Chambers, "is the typical English figure of that

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<sup>5</sup>John S. Farmer, ed., The Dramatic Writings of John Heywood (Guildford, England, 1966). Cf. Bolwell's comments on Heywood's anti-clericalism and the Chaucerian tradition, The Life and Works of John Heywood, p. 105.

<sup>6</sup>E. K. Chambers says that although Heywood "conformed to the Act of Supremacy," he "took More's line in Church matters" and "was in high favour under Mary, and at her death retired to Malines." E. K. Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage (London, 1903) II, p. 444.

<sup>7</sup>F. P. Wilson, The English Drama, 1485-1585, G. K. Hunter, ed., Volume IV of the Oxford History of English Literature (New York, 1969), p. 35.

characteristic movement whereby the drama, like every other form of literary expression, bound itself for a time to the service of heretical controversy."<sup>8</sup> Born in 1495, Bale studied at Cambridge and became a priest. He was converted to Protestantism, however, and soon came under the patronage of Thomas Cromwell, for whom he wrote plays in 1538 and 1539. After Cromwell's fall in 1540, Bale lived in Germany, returning to England in 1547. He became Bishop of Ossory in 1553. Bale again took refuge in Germany during the reign of Queen Mary, but he returned to England after the ascension to the throne of Queen Elizabeth, and died in 1563.<sup>9</sup> According to his own claim, Bale wrote at least twenty-one plays.<sup>10</sup> Only five of these, however, have survived: The Three Laws of Nature, Moses, and Christ; The Chief Promises of God Unto Man; The Temptation of Our Lord; John Baptist's Preaching in the Wilderness; and King

<sup>8</sup>Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, I, pp. 241-242.

<sup>9</sup>Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage, II, pp. 446-447. For further details about Bale's life and career, see John S. Farmer's biographical note in his edition of The Dramatic Works of John Bale (Guildford, England, 1966), pp. 300-302. A useful study of Bale's works is Jesse W. Harris, John Bale: A Study in the Minor Literature of the Reformation (Urbana, Ill., 1940).

<sup>10</sup>The following titles, taken from Bale's own list of his dramatic works, seem to have been anti-Catholic polemics: "de sectis Papisticis"; "Proditiones Papistarum"; "contra adulterantes Dei verbum" and "de imposturis Thomae Becketi." The complete list can be found in Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage, II, p. 447.

Johan.<sup>11</sup> The first four of these were "compyled" in 1538, in which year the first three, and possibly the fourth, were printed. The printing dates of the others are uncertain. According to E. K. Chambers, however, King Johan was "doubtless written before 1548," although the text as we know it shows signs of later revision, possibly for a performance in 1561.<sup>12</sup>

All of Bale's surviving plays are controversial in that they take an active, argumentative part in the religious quarrels of the author's time. Three of these plays, The Chief Promises, John Baptist's Preaching in the Wilderness and The Temptation of Our Lord may be read as a nearly continuous dramatic cycle, providing a summary of Bale's theology. The ideas presented in this trilogy are completely Protestant, even betraying a somewhat Puritanical frame of mind. In the second and third parts of this "cycle" Bale makes specific references to Catholicism. In John Baptist's Preaching in the Wilderness, Baleus Prolocutor,

<sup>11</sup>I have used John S. Farmer's facsimiles of The Three Laws, The Chief Promises of God, and The Temptation of Our Lord, volumes 23, 21, and 22 respectively, of the Tudor Facsimile Texts (New York, 1970); for John Baptist's Preaching in the Wilderness, which was not published in Farmer's facsimiles, I have used the version printed in Farmer, The Dramatic Writings of John Bale: for King Johan, I have used Barry B. Adams, ed., John Bale's King Johan (San Marino, Cal., 1969). Quotations from King Johan will be identified parenthetically by line number in the text.

<sup>12</sup>Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage, II, p. 450.

who acts as prologue and epilogue, derides the founders of monastic orders for inventing "new rulers" and urges the theatrical audience to "Believe neither Pope, nor priest of his consent."<sup>13</sup> In the same play, the figures of the Pharisee and Sadducee, in conflict with the Baptist, who has come to announce the new faith, are obvious representations of the Roman Catholic clergy, who are here being derided for their opposition to the Protestant faith. Bale shows the Pharisees and Sadducees -- and, by implication, the Catholic clergy -- to be hypocrites, and, through the character of John the Baptist, he denounces them for corrupting the Scriptures with their "pestilent traditions"<sup>14</sup> and for showing only "outward works" while having "in spirit nothing at all."<sup>15</sup>

In The Temptation of Our Lord, Bale presents Satan in the guise of a Monk who says that he, and others of his kind, know nothing of the Scriptures, living "all in contemplacyon."<sup>16</sup> Later, Satan shows that he will be responsible for all false religious opinions, for he plans to gather around himself "false prestes and byshoppes" and is positive that Christ's "vycar at Rome . . . wyll be my

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<sup>13</sup>Farmer, The Dramatic Writings of John Bale, p. 149.

<sup>14</sup>Farmer, The Dramatic Writings of John Bale, p. 138.

<sup>15</sup>Farmer, The Dramatic Writings of John Bale, p. 139.

<sup>16</sup>Bale, The Temptation of Our Lord, Sig. D iii<sup>v</sup>.

frynde."<sup>17</sup> Satan speaks to Christ, elaborating on the work that he plans to have the pope perform:

He shall me worshypp, and haue the worlde to rewarde,  
That thu here forsakeest, he wyll most hyghlye regarde,  
Gods worde wylle he treate underneeth hys fote for ever,  
And the heartes of men, from the truth thereof dyssever,  
Thy fayth wyll he hate, and slee thy flocke . . . .<sup>18</sup>

Bale's Three Laws of Nature, Moses, and Christ, written in the morality play tradition, tells how God sends his three laws, taught by Nature, Moses, and Christ, to govern mankind, and how all three have been subverted by the vice figure, Infidelity, and his followers. At the end, God's vengeance arrives to set all things right. According to E. K. Chambers, the Protestantism of Bale's Three Laws is "far more advanced and polemical" than that of his other plays printed at the same time.<sup>19</sup> Certainly Bale takes great care to present his vice figures as existing within a Roman Catholic frame of reference.<sup>20</sup> Infidelity, the antagonist, repeatedly swears "by the mass," by numerous saints, and by various objects regarded as sacred in

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<sup>17</sup>Bale, The Temptation of Our Lord, Sig. E iii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>18</sup>Bale, The Temptation of Our Lord, Sig. E iii<sup>r</sup>. In this passage I have changed the original word "dyssener" to the obvious "dyssever," a correction demanded by the sense and the rhyme.

<sup>19</sup>Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage, II, p. 449.

<sup>20</sup>Note that Bale does not evidently consider Infidelity a vice; at Sig. G i<sup>v</sup>, he speaks of "the six vyces, or frutes of Infydelyte." I would guess that for Bale Infidelity is the incarnation of evil itself, perhaps the devil, and the source of all vices; thus, Bale would consider infidelity a much more serious matter than any individual vice.

the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>21</sup> Swearing in itself would mark Infidelity as impious; but the particular oaths that he swears clearly delineate him a Roman Catholic. Furthermore, the tools which Infidelity uses to subvert God's laws also brand him as a Catholic; Bale has Infidelity give Idolatry and Sodomy, two of his followers, a collection of "brooches, beads, and pins" and urges them to encourage pilgrimages, devotion to relics, and the use of sacramentals to win the people away from the true religion. He urges also the use of dirges, trentals and papal decretals, "mixt with buggere" further to mislead the faithful.<sup>22</sup>

Bale also provides enough information about Infidelity's followers to prove to the reader that they are all representatives of various aspects of the Roman Catholic Church as seen by the post-Reformation controversialist. In a description of the costumes for the vices, Bale gives the following instructions, which leave no doubt of his intention:

Lete Idolatry be decked lyke an olde wytche,  
Sodomy lyke a monke of all sectes, Ambycyon  
lyke a byshop, Couetousnesse lyke a popysh  
doctour, and hypocresy lyke a grey  
fryre. The rest of the partes are easye enough  
to coniecture.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>For examples, see Three Laws, Sig. A vi<sup>v</sup>; Sig. A vii<sup>r</sup>; Sig. B v<sup>r</sup>; Sig. B vi<sup>r</sup>; etc.

<sup>22</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. B vii<sup>r</sup> - Sig. B vii<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>23</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. G i<sup>v</sup>.

The figure of Sodomy clearly associates himself with Catholicism when he says that "the popish hypocrytes/ Embrace me every where."<sup>24</sup> He claims that he and his vice will thrive as long as priests are forbidden to marry, and he then refers to a scandalous anecdote about prominent churchmen as proof of the truth of his claim.<sup>25</sup> The character of Idolatry is shown by Bale to be associated with many Roman Catholic practices and institutions, including "holye oyle and watter,"<sup>26</sup> devotions to the Blessed Virgin, beads, masses, "the holy frydaye fast," and saints' blessings.<sup>27</sup> Idolatry is also associated with the use of magical charms.<sup>28</sup> The figure of Avarice is linked by Bale with the sale of indulgences and relics and payments for masses, also practices of the Roman Catholic Church which were condemned by Luther and other leading Reformation thinkers. Avarice presents a creed which requires belief in all of the aforementioned practices; his creed also demands faith in the pope, the Roman hierarchy, and all the rituals and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. The purpose of all the elements of his creed, Avarice admits,

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<sup>24</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. B vi<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>25</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. B viii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>26</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. B viii<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>27</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. B v<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>28</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. B v<sup>r</sup> - B v<sup>v</sup>.

is to "brynge in moneye."<sup>29</sup> The figure of Ambition intends, in Bale's presentation, to subvert the ten commandments in order to increase his own power. He plans to trick the common people into the worship of saints and the making of pilgrimages. He also wishes to encourage swearing and to have the people pay only lip service to the observance of the Sabbath. He says that among the primary tools which he will use in his endeavors are "tradycyons" by which he would make the people observe "nothyng . . . but superstycyons" and have them worship idols.<sup>30</sup> Finally, the last of Infidelity's crew are Pseudodoctrina, who is said to teach "lousy tradycyons"<sup>31</sup> and "lyes for lucre with damnable superstycyons,"<sup>32</sup> and Hypocrisis, "the popes owne vycar,"<sup>33</sup> are represented explicitly as symbols of the Roman Catholic Church. They join, at the end of the fourth act,<sup>34</sup> with Infidelity to burn as a heretic the figure of Evangelium, who has earlier been identified as "Christes Gospell."<sup>35</sup>

Although Bale shows Infidelity in association with six other personages representing lesser vices, essentially he presents here only one kind of evil. Because for

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<sup>29</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. D iv<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>30</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. D ii<sup>v</sup> - Sig. D iii<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>31</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. E iv<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>32</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. E v<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>33</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. E ii<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>34</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. F i<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>35</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. D vii<sup>r</sup>.

Bale the essence of infidelity was the turning from the true Protestant religion toward the heresies and ~~mis-~~practices of the Roman Catholic Church, the six minor vice-characters are merely different external manifestations of Infidelity himself. The distinctions between these minor vices are never particularly clear, so that there is much overlapping in the work that each is to do. The reason for this overlapping is simply that each represents a different facet of the major vice Infidelity. Significantly, each of them has some detail in the description of his physical appearance or actions, that marks him as a facet also of Catholicism.

The longest and most successful of Bale's surviving plays is his King Johan in which he combines some of the elements of the morality play with the chronicle history of one of England's kings, and produces an allegorical contribution to Tudor religious controversy. Barry B. Adams and Irving Ribner have described in full detail the impact which dramatic representations of the historical King John had upon the development of the English history play in the time of Queen Elizabeth I.<sup>36</sup> But Bale's King Johan is also important as a major step in the development of the Tudor anti-Catholic drama.

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<sup>36</sup>The best summary of the importance of Bale's King Johan is that of Barry B. Adams, John Bale's King Johan, pp. 1 - 69. See also Irving Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare, Revised Edition (London, 1965), pp. 33-36.

King John (1167?-1216) was an important figure in the sixteenth century view of English history because of his uneasy relationship with the Church of Rome. As Irving Ribner says, "To the Tudors, King John was the one British ruler before Henry VIII who had attempted to oppose the papacy, and thus he was a national hero. As one who had died in the attempt, he was a royal martyr as well. King John was sympathetically treated in Protestant writings of the sixteenth century. Bale's account makes of him an unblemished Christian martyr defeated by the Antichrist he vainly tries to oppose . . . ." <sup>37</sup> That this view of King John was current in England in the sixteenth century is shown also by Barry B. Adams, who says this in his introduction to his edition of King Johan: "Bale's view of John as a martyr-king, forced against his will to submit to papal tyranny, evidently derives from William Tyndale's Obedience of a Christen Man, first printed in 1528. Although Tyndale's treatment of John is relatively brief, it sets forth the essential features of his character and reign as those were understood by Bale and his sixteenth-century reformers." <sup>38</sup>

More clearly than any other play of the period, King Johan shows the close identification between religion and

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<sup>37</sup>Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare, pp. 34-35.

<sup>38</sup>Adams, John Bale's King Johan, p. 25.

politics in sixteenth century England. As Barry B. Adams says, "Bale's ultimate concern is not so much religious as political . . . . It is the power of the king to assert his sovereignty in his own realm that is at stake, and Bale's purpose of course is to defend the royal authority as supreme in matters spiritual as well as temporal. The issue touches religion as well as politics, and this fact, together with Bale's violently polemical disposition, accounts for the vicious satire on Roman Catholic religious practices and institutions which fills the play and obscures some of its artistic qualities."<sup>39</sup> In fact, the basic assumption of the play is that because of his position in the Church, the pope wields enormous international political power which he exercises to the detriment of civil authority through the vast structure of the Roman Catholic Church and particularly through the complex network of the Roman Catholic secular clergy and religious orders. The exercise of such political influence, for Bale, plainly conflicts with the widely accepted view of kingship which the figure of England, in King Johan, expresses thus:

Trwly of the devyll they are pat do onythyng  
 To the subdewyng of any Christen kyng,  
 For be he good or bade, he is of Godes apoyntyng:  
 The good for the good, be bade ys for yll doyng.

(ll. 101-104)

In opposition to this, the figure of Sedition says that he himself is authorized by the Pope "to subdewe bothe

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<sup>39</sup>Adams, John Bale's King Johan, p. 64.

kyng and keyser" (l. 99), and that he holds "prynces in  
 scoorne, hate and dysdayne" (l. 188). In short, as he him-  
 self explains, Sediton is the Pope's "ambassador" in all  
 countries (ll. 212-217). He says of the Pope that,

For his holy cawse I mayntayne traytors and rebelles,  
 That no prince can haue his peples obedyence,  
 Except yt doth stand with the popes prehemynence.

(ll. 218-220)

It is plain, then, from the very beginning of King Johan,  
 that the conflict between John and the Pope is primarily a  
 political one.

However, many passages establish that there are other  
 than political reasons for opposing the papacy. England,  
 again, summarizes some of the most common charges against  
 the Church of Rome; being asked why she has called the  
 Pope "The wyld bore of Rome" (l. 71), she answers:

"For that he and his to such bestlynes inclyne.  
 They forsake Godes word, whych is most puer and cleane,  
 And vnto the lawys of synfull men they leane.  
 Lyke as the vyle swyne þe most vyle metes dessyer  
 And hath gret plesure to walowe them seluys in myre,  
 So hath this wyld bore, with his church vnyversall --  
 His sowe with hyr pygys and monstres bestyall --  
 Dyllyght in mennys draffe and covytus lucre all.  
 Yea, aper de sylua the prophet dyd hym call.<sup>40</sup>

(ll. 78-86)

Throughout the play, the division of good and evil  
 is constant, with John and England, of course, on the side

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<sup>40</sup> Adams identifies "aper de Sylua" as a reference to  
 the Vulgate Bible, Ps. lxxix, 74. Adams, John Bale's King  
 Johan, p. 151.

of good and the Church of Rome and all its adherents on that of evil. The morality-play abstract characters are identified with historical enemies of John, all members of the Catholic side of his conflict with Rome: Sedition becomes Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury whose elevation King John had opposed;<sup>41</sup> Dissimulation becomes Simon, of Swynsett, the Cistercian Monk who murders King John; Usurped Power is also known as Pope Innocent III; Private Wealth becomes Cardinal Pandulphus; Treason is simply a priest.<sup>42</sup>

The language of the main characters' speeches is used to indicate the author's bias. King Johan and England, for instance, both cite Scripture frequently.<sup>43</sup> On the other hand, Sedition, like Infidelity in The Three Laws,

<sup>41</sup>Doris Mary Stenton, English Society in the Early Middle Ages (Baltimore, 1967), p. 47.

<sup>42</sup>Adams, John Bale's King Johan, p. 70. Adams shows in his notes several interesting points about the abstract characters in King Johan: "Dissimulation" is also called "monastycall deuocyon" (l. 2103); "Usurped Power," according to Adams, is "a cant term for the papacy in sixteenth century anti-Catholic writings." He also points out that "Private Wealth" was associated particularly with the English monastic establishments." Adams, John Bale's King Johan, p. 149.

<sup>43</sup>For example, such citations as "Essaye protesteth in this same clause . . . (l. 130); "as saynt Pawle meanyth vnto the Collessyans playne" (l. 54); "Lyke as Christ ded saye to be wyckyd pharyseys" (l. 64); and "as synt John dothe tell" (l. 117), are common. Direct quotation of Scripture is also present, as in England's reference to the clergy as "blynd leaders of the blynd" (l. 34), an adaptation of Christ's words in the New Testament (Matt. 15:14).

and like many vice characters in later plays, frequently swears what Bale must have considered idolatrous oaths. In *Sedition's* first four speeches we find "by Iesus" (l. 43), "Be my fayth and trowth" (l. 47), "by be messe" (l. 50), and "by the holy trynyte" (l. 52). Somewhat later, *Sedition* approaches blasphemy, certainly gross irreverence, when, England having said that God is "the spowse of euery sort/ pat seke hym in fayth to per sowlys helth and comfort." (ll. 109-110), *Sedition* responds, "He ys scant honest that so many wyfes wyll haue" (l. 111).

It is easy to see the same image of English Protestantism emerging here as was described in Foxe's Actes and Monuments. Bale links the reformed church with that established by Christ and compares the enemies of the original Church, the pharisees and sadducees, with the popes and bishops of the Roman Catholic Church. The moral view of Bale is that the good man's struggle to attain a state of Christian virtue is a never-ending one, and that the struggle is always the same in whatever century it takes place, a battle between God and the devil; although times may change, according to Bale, the battle itself remains the same, as do the weapons. The good man uses his faith in God and the graces that God has given him to resist the forces of evil who fight using lies, superstition, ignorance and illicit powers. For Bale, as for Foxe and many others

of their generation, there is a discernible pattern in the history of mankind: always there has been a people chosen by God; always they have had to resist the attempts of powerful earthly forces to crush them or to make them turn away from God. This is a pattern that Bale's generation saw in both the Old and New Testaments, in the lives of the great Jewish leaders, of Christ and of the apostles. Foxe's Actes and Monuments showed the pattern to be recurring in the modern world in which the chosen people, the Protestants, fought to resist the worldly authority of the Church of Rome. Bale demonstrated the same pattern in his plays, which were, of course, for the most part written long before Foxe published Actes and Monuments. It is this historical pattern, established in the drama by Bale and fixed firmly in the scheme of Elizabethan historical philosophy by Foxe, which will determine the thinking of most of the Tudor Protestant playwrights.

If there is a "school of Bale" in the drama, its common characteristic is not in the area of dramatic structure, nor of style of verse, but in this conception of the recurring patterns of religious history, which made many playwrights seek out examples from the Bible, from mythology and legends and from history of parallels to their present-day problems, just as Bale had done in King Johan and in his Biblical plays. The frequent use of anachronism and the introduction of English place-names into Biblical or

classical settings are not accidental, nor the result always of incompetence or carelessness on the part of the dramatist; the playwrights who introduced such inconsistencies into their works may only have been indicating to their audiences the universal relevance of their dramatic themes and the eternal recurrence of a philosophical pattern.

One play that seems strongly influenced by the plays of John Bale is the anonymous biblical play, Interlude of John the Evangelist,<sup>44</sup> which Farmer dates between 1547 and 1553.<sup>45</sup> This contains several passages implicitly satirizing Roman Catholics. For instance, there is some scoffing at the idea of indulgences,<sup>46</sup> and the vice, Evil Council, says that he has been in St. Catherine's,<sup>47</sup> which Farmer identifies as a well-known station on the "Pilgrim's Way" from Winchester to Canterbury.<sup>48</sup> John the Evangelist, the central figure of the play, criticizes another character with these words:

Twice in the week, he said, he did fast;  
From meat and drink he did, but not from deadly sin;  
And that is the fast that pleaseth God best.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>John S. Farmer, ed., Early English Dramatists: Recently Discovered "Lost" Tudor Plays with some others, (Guildford, England, 1966). Hereafter, this book will be cited as "Lost" Tudor Plays.

<sup>45</sup>F. P. Wilson, however, suggests an earlier date for this interlude. Wilson, The English Drama, 1485-1585, p. 233.

<sup>46</sup>Farmer, "Lost" Tudor Plays, p. 352.

<sup>47</sup>Farmer, "Lost" Tudor Plays, p. 361.

<sup>48</sup>Farmer, "Lost" Tudor Plays, p. 459.

<sup>49</sup>Farmer, "Lost" Tudor Plays, p. 366.

On the surface, this passage is an attack on any religious hypocrisy. But Tudor Protestants frequently accused Roman Catholics of pharisaically following the letter, rather than the spirit, of God's law, and particularly of putting traditional rituals before the basic truths of religion. Therefore John's description here may be taken to refer to Roman Catholicism.

Yet another play in the manner of Bale, The Resurrection of Our Lord,<sup>50</sup> was written by an unknown author whose Protestantism can be detected in the religious teachings which are reflected in many passages of the text.<sup>51</sup> Aside from the doctrines preached here, the author's anti-Catholicism is apparent; throughout the play, the Pharisees of the time of Christ are referred to as "bishops"<sup>52</sup> and are condemned for discouraging the common people from reading the Scriptures,<sup>53</sup> a charge which, in the Tudor era, was commonly made against the Roman Catholic hierarchy.

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<sup>50</sup>J. Dover Wilson and Bertram Dobell, eds., The Resurrection of Our Lord, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1912).

<sup>51</sup>Wilson and Dobell, The Resurrection of Our Lord, p. vi.

<sup>52</sup>Wilson and Dobell, The Resurrection of Our Lord, l. 307; l. 511; et al.

<sup>53</sup>Wilson and Dobell, The Resurrection of Our Lord, ll. 311-320.

The biblical interlude of Jacob and Esau<sup>54</sup> can be shown to be another example of anti-Catholic drama. Murray Roston says that in this play Esau represents "the Catholic anti-Christ who claims the rights of the first-born without justifying those rights by his own moral integrity, whereas the Protestant Jacob not only qualifies by his deeds but is also blessed with the divine Grace which constitutes election."<sup>55</sup> This theme, according to Roston, is established in the play's prologue, which refers to Calvin's doctrine of predestination.<sup>56</sup>

Another anti-Catholic play, possibly influenced by Bale, is the fragmentary "Somebody and Others".<sup>57</sup> Although most of the text of this play is lost, the surviving segment demonstrates its Protestant polemic character.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup>John S. Farmer, ed., Early English Dramatists Six Anonymous Plays, Second Series (Guildford, England, 1966). Hereafter, this book will be cited as Six Anonymous Plays, Second Series.

<sup>55</sup>Murray Roston, Biblical Drama in England, From the Middle Ages to the Present Day (Evanston, Ill., 1968), p. 76.

<sup>56</sup>Roston, Biblical Drama in England, From the Middle Ages to the Present Day, pp. 76-77. See also Bevington, Tudor Drama and Politics, pp. 110-111.

<sup>57</sup>W. W. Greg, ed., "Somebody and Others," Malone Society Collections, Vol. II, Part III (Oxford, 1931), pp. 253-256, with an unpaginated facsimile of the original inserted between pp. 252-253.

<sup>58</sup>According to E. K. Chambers, "the ruling influence" on this play "is that of Lindsay's Satyre of the Thre Estaites . . . ." Chambers, The Mediaeval Stage, II, p. 223.

According to W. W. Greg, "It is clear . . . that the piece was written in favour of the reformed religion. Verity, therefore, stands for Protestant doctrine. But Verity is here despoiled and buried, her garments being assumed by Simony, though Verity foresees her eventual rehabilitation after 'many yeres.' We may safely take it, therefore, that the piece was composed at a time when the Protestant faith had been recently restored. Now from this point of view Verity may be said to have been overthrown on the fall of Cromwell in 1540 and again on the accession of Mary in 1553. The play may consequently have been produced either in the first years of Edward VI, say 1547-50, or in those of Elizabeth, say 1558-60. Between these alternatives there seems little to choose. The Catholic reaction at the end of Henry VIII's reign lasted rather longer, but either might appear 'many yeres' to those who suffered under it."<sup>59</sup>

A more specifically anti-Catholic play is Lusty Juventus,<sup>60</sup> published in 1560 although written some time earlier by Richard Wever, whom E. K. Chambers describes as "a disciple of John Bale."<sup>61</sup> In this play, the central

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<sup>59</sup>Greg, "Somebody and Others," pp. 251-252. On the evidence of the type face used, Greg believes that the fragment dates most probably from the time of Edward VI. Greg, "Somebody and Others", p. 252.

<sup>60</sup>John S. Farmer, ed., The Dramatic Writings of Richard Wever and Thomas Ingeland (Guildford, England, 1966). Hereafter, this book will be cited as Writings of Wever and Ingeland.

<sup>61</sup>Chambers, The Mediaval Stage, II, p. 223. According to Chambers, Lusty Juventus was written c. 1547-1553. Chambers, The Mediaval Stage, II, p. 460.

character, Youth, is converted from Catholicism to Protestantism, slips temporarily back to his former religion and returns to the Protestant fold by the end of the play.

Wever here portrays Catholicism as a religion of hypocrisy, ignorance, and superstition. The figure of Knowledge tells Youth that those who instructed him in the Catholic religion had been themselves "wrapped in ignorance, / Being deceived by false preachers."<sup>62</sup> When the Devil appears, he confirms that the older people believe in his laws, but the young refuse to believe, "In old traditions made by men, / But they will live, as the Scripture teacheth them."<sup>63</sup>

In Lusty Juventus, as in Bale's Preaching of John the Baptist, the older characters represent the old religion, supported by Hypocrisy, Ignorance and the devil himself; the young, on the other hand, represent Protestantism, instructed as they are by Knowledge and Good Counsel, and supported by the faces of goodness. The homiletic portions of the play support this interpretation, for Knowledge emphasizes the Lutheran belief in the need for "faith in Christ's merits" as the only means of justification and achieving "the reward of the heavenly inheritance."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Farmer, Writings of Wever and Ingeland, p. 11

<sup>63</sup>Farmer, Writings of Wever and Ingeland, p. 15.

<sup>64</sup>Farmer, Writings of Wever and Ingeland, pp. 10-11.

The author's anti-Catholic bias is clearly seen when he has Hypocrisy catalogue those "Holy"<sup>65</sup> things by means of which he is able to seduce men away from the Protestant religion. This list includes cardinals, popes, vestments, hermits, friars, bishops, pardons, beads, saints, images, relics, bulls, fastings, visions, water, bread, oils, ashes, rings, kneelings, crosses, bells, candles, tapers, and many other objects, all, he says, of his own invention and all called "Holy."<sup>65</sup>

We have already seen that no less a Protestant authority than Nowell condemned the habit of swearing oaths "by the names of saints, . . . by the names of other men or creatures."<sup>66</sup> Frequently oaths of a peculiarly Roman Catholic frame of reference are used in Tudor plays as a means of branding as Catholics the generally villainous characters who mouth them.

In Lusty Juventus, for example, it is worth noting that Youth, before his conversion, swears frequently "by the mass."<sup>67</sup> He ceases to do so when he is converted to Protestantism. He falls back into this habit when he is seduced away from Knowledge and Good Counsel,<sup>68</sup> but again

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<sup>65</sup>Farmer, Writings of Wever and Ingeland, pp. 17-18.

<sup>66</sup>Corrie, Nowell's Catechism, p. 128.

<sup>67</sup>For examples, see Farmer, Writings of Wever and Ingeland, p. 5, p. 6, et al.

<sup>68</sup>Farmer, Writings of Wever and Ingeland, p. 27.

ceases when he returns to Protestantism. Hypocrisy and Fellowship also swear this Roman Catholic oath.<sup>69</sup>

Another play in which oaths seem to identify the villainous characters as Catholics is Impatient Poverty,<sup>70</sup> which John S. Farmer assigns to the time of Edward VI, and which he calls "distinctly and settled Protestant" throughout.<sup>71</sup> I include it among the anti-Catholic plays because the lines assigned to some of the characters, especially the vices, are full of references to Catholicism and of oaths that would have been meaningless on the lips of any but Catholics. Prosperity, who is known as Impatient Poverty before he falls into the hands of the vice Envy, only swears at all after his fall from virtue. Some of his oaths are "By Saint Jame," "By Saint Chad" and "By the bread that God brake."<sup>72</sup> Envy, the principal vice in

<sup>69</sup>Farmer, Writings of Wever and Ingeland. For examples of Hypocrisy's use of this oath, see pp. 19; 22; 23; and 26. Fellowship uses it on p. 27.

<sup>70</sup>Reprinted in Farmer, "Lost" Tudor Plays.

<sup>71</sup>Farmer, "Lost" Tudor Plays, p. 410. In assigning this play to the Edwardian period, Farmer claims that a reference in the text to Queen Elizabeth is a late interpolation made at the time of a later printing. Note that E. K. Chambers calls Impatient Poverty "non-controversial" and not Protestant in tone. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, p. 20.

<sup>72</sup>Farmer, "Lost" Tudor Plays, p. 330, p. 336, and p. 337 respectively. With regard to the second of these Farmer explains that St. Chad had been Bishop of York in the seventh century and had been "a popular saint in the English calendar," his feast falling on March 2. Farmer, "Lost" Tudor Plays, p. 459.

this play, swears a great deal more frequently. Some of his oaths are "By the mass," "Cock's bones," "by our lady," "By our blessed lady" and "By our lady of Wolpit."<sup>73</sup>

The Trial of Treasure<sup>74</sup> (1567) also abounds in passages of swearing on the part of the vices. "By the mass" is sworn several times.<sup>75</sup> Inclination swears an oath "By Saint Mary,"<sup>76</sup> and Sturdiness swears "By the guts of Goliah"<sup>77</sup>; Lust swears "By the flesh of Goliah."<sup>78</sup> It is interesting, given the Reformation consciousness of modern-day parallels with the Old Testament, and the tendency of Tudor Protestants to see themselves as the new Chosen People, that these vices should swear in the name of the Philistine defeated by David (I Sam. 17:48-51). Another vice, Greedy-Guts, swears "By my matins cheese,"<sup>79</sup> a

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<sup>73</sup>Farmer, "Lost" Tudor Plays, pp. 314-315; p. 340; p. 316, p. 333, and p. 315, respectively. Farmer notes that Wolpit was a place in Suffolk to which pilgrimages had been made before the Reformation. It had been in the possession of monks from the time of Edward I. Farmer, "Lost" Tudor Plays, p. 472.

<sup>74</sup>John Farmer, ed., Early English Dramatists: Anonymous Plays, Third Series (Guildford, England, 1966). Hereafter, this book will be cited as Anonymous Plays, Third series.

<sup>75</sup>Farmer, Anonymous Plays, Third series, pp. 267; 273; 274; 278; 280, et al.

<sup>76</sup>Farmer, Anonymous Plays, Third series, p. 296.

<sup>77</sup>Farmer, Anonymous Plays, Third series, p. 268.

<sup>78</sup>Farmer, Anonymous Plays, Third series, p. 294.

<sup>79</sup>Farmer, Anonymous Plays, Third series, p. 273.

particularly strange oath perhaps intended to remind the audience of the Catholic monks and their rituals. Later, Greedy-Guts interjects the phrase "Josus benedicite"<sup>80</sup> which might also have recalled the Latin chants associated with monasteries and Catholicism.

Still another example of the use of "Roman Catholic" oaths is to be found in Jack Juggler,<sup>81</sup> registered in 1562-63 and probably written somewhat earlier. David Bevington suggests that this play might have been written during the reign of Queen Mary and "doctored" for publication under Queen Elizabeth. He suggests, for example, that the epilogue, which interprets the play as "a satire on transubstantiation" is a late Protestant addition.<sup>82</sup> Yet the amount of characteristically Catholic oaths in Jack Juggler, of which there is a considerable number, might argue for an Elizabethan origin for this play. For example, some oaths which are distinctly Catholic are "by the mass"<sup>83</sup> and "In nomine patris, God and our blessed lady."<sup>84</sup> The latter seems to be intended as particularly "Catholic." Although the English phrase, "In the name of

<sup>80</sup>Farmer, Anonymous Plays, Third series, p. 280.

<sup>81</sup>Reprinted in Farmer, Anonymous Plays, Third series.

<sup>82</sup>Bevington, Tudor Drama and Politics, p. 126.

<sup>83</sup>Farmer, Anonymous Plays, Third series, p. 130.

<sup>84</sup>Farmer, Anonymous Plays, Third series, p. 134.

the Father," is commonly used by both Catholics and Protestants at the beginning and end of prayers, among other times; the Latin "In nomine patris" are the first words of the Catholic mass and, as such, may have suggested superstition and heresy to any who recognized them; but, even to those who did not understand the words, these words may also have suggested the use of Latin prayer, which, as we have seen, was regarded as an objectionable Roman Catholic superstition.<sup>85</sup> But the phrase "In nomine patris, God and our blessed lady" might also have suggested a form of what was thought to be idolatry practiced by Catholics, for the formula should have been "In nomine patris, et filii, et spiritus sancti," invoking God as father, son and holy spirit; yet in the version spoken in Jack Juggler "our blessed lady" seems to have become a part of the trinity. Here the author seems to be parodying what he believed was Catholicism's elevation of Mary, the mother of Christ, to the status of an idol or demi-god.

There are, in a number of other plays, lesser examples of playwrights' identifying evil or reprehensible characters with the Church of Rome through the use of

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<sup>85</sup>According to Nowell, the reading of the Scriptures "in a strange tongue . . . such as the people understandeth not" was "grossly to mock God and his people, and shamelessly to abuse them both." Corrie, Nowell's Catechism, p. 116.

swearing. For example, in Thersites,<sup>86</sup> registered 1562-63, the comic coward-hero swears some peculiarly Catholic oaths. The phrase "by the mass," for example, occurs frequently.<sup>87</sup> The oath "by the masse" can also be found three times in the two extant fragments of The Cruel Debtor,<sup>88</sup> each time spoken by one of the vice figures.<sup>89</sup>

In emphasizing a verbal trick played by certain Tudor playwrights, I hope that I will not be accused of making too much of too little. In Tudor England oaths were taken seriously and were not habitually used on the stage without good reason. That a number of vice-figures on the mid-sixteenth century stage were made to sprinkle their speeches with oaths was only appropriate, in the desire to show, within the limitations of taste, the vices to be vicious. But the fact that the vices were given specifically Catholic oaths to speak can have two possible

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<sup>86</sup>John S. Farmer, ed., Early English Dramatists: Six Anonymous Plays, First Series (Guildford, England, 1966). Hereafter, this book will be cited as Six Anonymous Plays, First Series.

<sup>87</sup>Farmer, Six Anonymous Plays, First series, pp. 410; 412; and 420, for example.

<sup>88</sup>W. W. Greg, ed., "The Cruel Debtor," Malone Society Collections, I, Parts IV and V (Oxford, 1911), pp. 315-323. Another fragment was published in Malone Society Collections II, Part II, pp. 142-144. According to Greg, this play was originally published c. 1566.

<sup>89</sup>Greg, "The Cruel Debtor," first fragment, l. 48; second fragment, l. 3 and l. 24.

significances. First, such oaths were officially meaningless; speaking from the Protestant theological perspective, a person could not efficaciously swear by a saint's name, nor by the mass, nor by anything except the name of God. In theory, then, the actor who used such an oath on the stage was uttering nonsense, not blasphemy, for he was not speaking of anything that was truly sacred. But sixteenth-century Catholics did swear such oaths, or, at any rate, were believed to do so; in putting such oaths into the mouths of the vices, Tudor playwrights were in effect equating Catholics with the vices and attributing the other attributes of the vices to the Catholics. This was in perfect keeping with the controversial stance of these plays; if we see the Pope, so often depicted as the anti-Christ, in the role of the devil or the chief vice, then all the subsidiary devils or vices who pay him allegiance can be interpreted as representing the lesser Catholic clergy or the lay members of the Church of Rome. At any rate, whether or not this technique be seen as an effective rhetorical or dramatic device, the evidence tends to show that many dramatists practiced it.

To return to plays that are more openly anti-Catholic, we should mention The Pedlars Prophecy,<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>W. W. Greg, ed., The Pedlar's Prophecy, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1914). Quotations from this edition will be identified parenthetically by line number in the text.

possibly written by Robert Wilson, and which was published in 1595, although almost certainly written a good deal earlier than that. Here we find two speeches which attack Catholics. In the first, the Interpreter of the play identifies "old papists" with those who "despise the word of God omnipotent" (ll. 1279-1280). Shortly thereafter in this play, the "Pedlar" condemns "Bishops and Priests" as "the beginners of all controversies" (ll. 1285-1288).

Related to The Pedlars Prophecy, and possibly written also by Robert Wilson, is The Cobler's Prophecy, which was published in 1594.<sup>91</sup> The play's principal anti-Catholic dialogue occurs when the hero, Rafe Cobler, encounters Charon, the mythical ferryman to the underworld. Charon tells Rafe that he numbers among those who have journeyed to hell in his boat, "Popes and Prelates, Princes and Iudges more than/ I number can" (ll. 634-635). The conversation between Rafe and Charon is then interrupted by a voice calling for a boat; the speaker identifies himself as "The ghost of a gray Frier/ So troubled with Nunnes as neuer Frier was" (ll. 644-645).

Both The Pedlars Prophecy and The Cobler's Prophecy deal in mere anti-Catholic buffoonery. Their anti-clerical jibes are evidently aimed at providing belly-laughs for a mass audience, and do not contain any serious

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<sup>91</sup>A. C. Wood, ed., The Cobler's Prophecy, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1914). All quotations from this edition will be identified parenthetically by line number in the text.

doctrinal attacks on the Church of Rome. But at the same time that comic anti-Catholicism was being presented on the stage, it was still possible to find examples of serious plays in the Protestant morality tradition. One such play was Lewis Wager's The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene,<sup>92</sup> which was published in 1566. It is clear that the overall theme of Mary Magdalene is Protestant. Murray Roston says of Mary Magdalene that, "The opening of the interlude, with its parody of Catholic liturgy, leaves no doubt that Wager was a staunch Protestant, and the main doctrinal lesson the work sought to teach was that Faith was demanded of man even more than love."<sup>93</sup> Aside from this Lutheran theme, many of the incidental details in the play suggest the author's anti-Catholic bias even further. For example, the figure of Iniquity says of himself that, "Lyke obstinate Friers I temper my looke,/ Which had one eie on a wench, and an other on a boke" (Sig. C iii<sup>r</sup>). Moreover, the dialogue frequently links bishops and priests with the pharisees of the New Testament.<sup>94</sup> Finally, the vice Infidelity frequently

<sup>92</sup> Lewis Wager, The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene, ed. John S. Farmer, Tudor Facsimile Texts, No. 36, (New York, 1970). Quotations from this edition will be identified parenthetically by page number in the text.

<sup>93</sup> Roston, Biblical Drama in England, From the Middle Ages to the Present Day, p. 68.

<sup>94</sup> See, for example, "byshops, phariseys, elders and kynges" (Sig. A iv<sup>r</sup>); "bishops, priests and pharisees" (Sig. B iii); et al.

makes use of "Catholic" oaths, such as "By the Mass" (e.g., Sig. G iv<sup>V</sup>), "Body of God" (e.g., Sig. D i<sup>F</sup>) and "by Saint Anne" (e.g., Sig. C iv<sup>V</sup>), among many others.

Another play which partakes of the morality tradition is W. Wager's The Longer Thou Livest, the More Fool Thou Art,<sup>95</sup> which was published in 1569 and specifically attacks the Catholic Church. Here, one of the exemplars of Catholicism is Moros, the fool, who rings "the saunce bell" in the church (l. 164). This is a reference to the use of the sanctus bells as part of Catholic ritual.<sup>96</sup> When offered a religious book by the figure of Piety, Moros' first concern is whether the book has "any saints in it and pilcrows" (l. 470). According to R. Mark Benbow, Moros is referring to "the woodcuts which decorated Catholic Primers and Hours to the Virgin Mary" and to the marks used in some Catholic books "for calling attention to specific matter."<sup>97</sup>

Wager provides an even more specific denunciation of the Catholic Church in the words of the allegorical

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<sup>95</sup>W. Wager, The Longer Thou Livest and Enough Is as Good as a Feast, ed. R. Mark Benbow (Lincoln, Neb., 1967). Quotations from this edition will be identified parenthetically by line number in the text.

<sup>96</sup>Wager, The Longer Thou Livest and Enough Is as Good as a Feast, p. 10n.

<sup>97</sup>Wager, The Longer Thou Livest and Enough Is as Good as a Feast, p. 22n.

figure of Discipline, who gives this warning to Moros:

The greatest heresy which ever was  
 Hath the pope and his adherents published,  
 Yea, the heresy of Arius it doth pass,  
 For Christ and his benefits it hath extinguished.  
 Example by the wicked Mass satisfactory  
 Which to Christ's death they make equivalent,  
 For they call it a sacrifice propitiatory,  
 Which is a heresy most pestilent;  
 Again, prayers to saints that be dead,  
 Which is a great point of infidelity,  
 For they forsake Christ which is the head  
 Who taught to worship in sprite and verity.

(11. 295-306)

The Vice figure, Ignorance, introduces himself as  
 having misled "the papists" whom:

I have so taught . . . that howsoever the wind blow,  
 They shall still incline to my sentence,  
 So that though they have knowledge and cunning,  
 They are but ignorant and fools.  
 After every heresy and popery they are running,  
 And delight daily to learn at new schools.

(11. 1279-1284)

Moros swears a great number of "Catholic" oaths in  
The Longer Thou Livest, such as "Body of God" (1. 596),  
 "By God's passion" (1. 709), "By Saint Malkin" (1. 1486),  
 "Blood, sides, heart and wounds" (1. 1743) and "by the  
 mass" (1. 1811), among others.

Piety's final speech in this play is a prayer for  
 the Queen and her Council,

That they may agree to maintain God's Gospel  
 Which is the most true and sincere religion.  
 To root out Anti-Christ, I pray God, they may  
 take pain . . . .

(11. 1977-1979)

One of the best of the Protestant morality plays was New Custom,<sup>98</sup> printed in 1573 but written, according to Farmer, sometime after 1561.<sup>99</sup> As Farmer says, New Custom "is anti-Papist, and was obviously written in furtherance of the Reformation."<sup>100</sup> In the morality play tradition, the cast of characters of New Custom is comprised of abstractions such as New Custom, the hero of the play, who represents the "new" Protestant view of Christianity. Opposing New Custom are representatives of the "old" Roman Catholic Church: Perverse Doctrine, described in the list of characters as "an olde Popishe priest"; Ignorance, who calls himself ironically "the mother of true deuotion" (sig. A iii<sup>v</sup>);<sup>101</sup> other proponents of Catholicism are Hypocrisy, Crewelty and Avarice. Perverse Doctrine also makes reference to friends of his who never appear in the play, namely Superstition and Idolatry, (Sig. A iv<sup>r</sup>), and another of his friends is Cruelty (Sig. C iii<sup>r</sup>). He also

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<sup>98</sup>John S. Farmer, ed. New Custom, Tudor Facsimile Texts No. 46 (New York, 1970). Quotations from this edition will be identified parenthetically by page number in the text.

<sup>99</sup>Farmer, Anonymous Plays, Third series, p. 286. Farmer here also points out that there is in the play an "obvious allusion to the dissemination of the Genevan translation of the Bible . . . which was reprinted in England in 1561.

<sup>100</sup>Farmer, Anonymous Plays, Third Series, p. 286.

<sup>101</sup>There is some question as to the gender of this character; although here called "mother," Ignorance is described in the dramatis personae as a priest.

says that without the aid of his sister, Hypocrisy, his works could never thrive (Sig. D iii<sup>r</sup>). Hypocrisy is one of the principal qualities of the Catholic faction in this play. In order better to work against New Custom, the vices change their names, Perverse Doctrine becoming "Sounde doctrine" and Ignorance "Simplicitie" (Sig. A iv<sup>r</sup>). Cruelty takes the name "Justice with Seueritie" and Avarice becomes "Frugalitie" (Sig. D i<sup>r</sup>). As is so often the case in these plays, there is a good deal of swearing in New Custom, again always on the part of the vice characters, and always in a style we have come to recognize as signifying a Catholic character. Perverse Doctrine swears "By the masse" (Sig. A iii<sup>r</sup>); "by goddes sowle" (Sig. B ii<sup>r</sup>); and "by the masse" (Sig. B iii<sup>r</sup>). All the other vices voice oaths as well. Within a short passage of dialogue Cruelty swears "By the Masse" and "His woundes, hart and bloud," and Avarice swears "by goddes foote" and "by goddes bodie" (Sig. C iv<sup>r</sup>).

More important, however, than the external trappings of the Catholic figures in New Custom is the expression of a definite religious point of view. Much more a theological work than even such plays as King Johan, New Custom was clearly written for the edification and instruction of an audience and to provide an apology for the Reformation. The author first establishes the case against the old religion as personified by Perverse Doctrine and his friends

and relations, and then introduces New Custom and his friends "Light of the gospell," like New Custom a minister, Assurance, a virtue, and "Goddess felicitie", a sage, and allows them to argue the case for the reformed religion. Taken as a whole, New Custom is one of the most gentle and reasonable of the polemical dramatic works of the period.

Perverse Doctrine, the central vice, complains at the beginning of the play about the new tendency he perceives in the Christian churches, signified by the "newe fangled prating elves" -- the young preachers of the reformed religion -- who "Prinke up so pertly of late in euery place . . . / And go about us ancients flatly to deface . . ." (Sig. A iii<sup>r</sup>). Perverse Doctrine, then, represents the old style, the older generation, which is soon to be supplanted these "younge men . . . medlers in Diuinitie," who have, "No boke nowe in their handes, but all scripture, scripture./ Eyther the whole Bible, or the Newe Testament you may be sure." This new generation of churchmen, then, is one which insists on returning to the authority of the Bible and disallowing Catholic ritual and ceremony (Sig. A iii<sup>r</sup>). Later in the play, Perverse Doctrine complains that his problems are caused by the "Geneuian doctours" who have been coming into England (Sig. C iii<sup>r</sup>). One of these is New Custom, described by

Perverse Doctrine as "a younge vpstart ladde" (Sig. A iii<sup>v</sup>)

who is one of the leaders of the new movement. Perverse

Doctrine says that New Custom

. . . disalloweth our ceremonies, and rites, and  
 teacheth another way  
 To serue God, than that whiche wee do use.  
 And goeth about the peoples myndes to seduce.  
 It is a pestilent knaue, hee wyll haue priestes  
 no corner cappes to weare.  
 Surplices, are superstition - beades, paxes, and  
 suche other geare,  
 Crosses, belles, candells, oyle, bran, salt,  
 spettle, and incense,  
 With sensing, and singing hee accomptes not worth  
 iii halfpense,  
 And cries out on them all, if to repete them I  
 wist  
 Suche holy things wherein our religion doth consist.  
 But hee commaundes the seruice in English to be  
 readde.  
 And for the holy Legende the Bible to put in his  
 steadde.  
 Euery man to loke thereon at his list and pleasure.  
 Euery man to studie diuinitie at his conuenient  
 leasure.

(Sig. A iii<sup>v</sup> - Sig. A iv<sup>r</sup>)

When New Custom himself arrives on the scene, he  
 presents his view of what is wrong with the old Church;  
 his opinion is that the world and the Church have become  
 corrupt and that men have fallen away from God's original  
 teachings:

For since Goddes feare decayed, and Hypocrisie crept  
 in,  
 In hope of some gaines, and lucre to win:  
 Crueltie bare a stroke, who with fagot and fier,  
 Braught all things to passe that hee did desier.  
 Next Auarice spilt all, whiche left it should be  
 spide:  
 Hypocrasie ensued the matter to hide.  
 Then brought they in their monsters, their Masses,  
 their Light,

Their Torches at noone, to darken our sight.  
 Their Popes, and their pardones, their Purgatorios  
 for sowles,  
 Their smoking of the Church, and flinging of coles.

(Sig. B i<sup>V</sup> - Sig. B ii<sup>R</sup>)

When questioned as to his meaning, New Custom goes on to explain:

I sayde that the Masse, and suche trumperie as that,  
 Popery, Purgatorie, pardons were flatt  
 Against Goddes worde, and Primitiue Constitution  
 Crept in through Couetousnesse, and superstition  
 Of late yeres, through Blindeness, and men of no  
 knowledge,  
 Euen suche as haue ben in euery age.

(Sig. B ii<sup>R</sup> - Sig. B ii<sup>V</sup>)

As may be seen from these brief samples of this dialogue, New Custom is a play very much concerned with religious ideas and with teaching the reasoning behind the Protestant Reformation. It is interesting to note that the principal vice, Perverse Doctrine, is finally so moved by the arguments of the young New Custom that he repents his past deeds, is himself converted to Protestantism, and is given a new name -- figuratively re-baptized -- "Sincere doctrine" (Sig. D iii<sup>R</sup>). New Custom is himself revealed to be not a preacher of anything new, but to be actually "primitiue Constitution," which comes

. . . from the verie head  
 Of the Church, which is Christ and his disciples all  
 And from the fathers at that time taking Originall.

(Sig. D iii<sup>V</sup>)

In other words, the new religion is nothing more than a

return to the original teachings of Christ and the early Church and a rejection of those corrupt customs that have grown up around the Church of Rome.

A partially anti-Catholic play dating from the 1570's is the anonymous Misogonus,<sup>102</sup> the existing manuscript copy of which is dated 1577, although the play may have been written a good deal earlier.<sup>103</sup> Misogonus, deriving from the biblical story of the Prodigal Son, tells the story of two brothers, the virtuous Philogonus and the vicious Misogonus. Before his reversion to goodness at the end of the play, we witness many scenes depicting Misogonus in his life of vice. One of the characters whom he encounters in this period is Sir John, identified in the list of characters as Sacerdotus, "priest." That Sir John is meant to be taken as a Roman Catholic priest is evident from his references to Latin prayers<sup>104</sup> and his oaths, such as, for example, "By St. Patrick"<sup>105</sup> and "By the body of our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>106</sup> Sir John is shown carousing with Misogonus and such raffish characters as

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<sup>102</sup> John S. Farmer, ed., Six Anonymous Plays, Second series.

<sup>103</sup> Farmer, Six Anonymous Plays, Second series, p. 404.

<sup>104</sup> Farmer, Six Anonymous Plays, Second series, p. 183.

<sup>105</sup> Farmer, Six Anonymous Plays, Second series, p. 185.

<sup>106</sup> Farmer, Six Anonymous Plays, Second series, p. 181.

Oenophilus, Orgelus and Melissa Meritrix.<sup>107</sup> The priest ignores his clerk's call for him to come to lead a church service because, says Sir John, "I am well occupied" with the company named above.<sup>108</sup> When the character of Liturgus berates him for not being a better influence on Misogonus, Sir John tells Liturgus, "Whensoever I meet you, sir, look your head that you fend! / A fart for you all!" With that, the priest leaves with Melissa Meritrix.<sup>109</sup> Even apart from the representation of Sir John, Misogonus is, as John S. Farmer notes, "hard to beat" for the "variety and force" of its oaths,<sup>110</sup> all of which, we may mention, are "Catholic" in sense and are, naturally, assigned to the vicious characters.

Another play that contains anti-Catholic references is Ulpian Fulwell's Like Will to Like (1568).<sup>111</sup> Although as E. K. Chambers says, the play generally is a

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<sup>107</sup> Farmer, Six Anonymous Plays, Second series, pp. 176-191. The names of these characters signify "Lover of Wine," "Proud" and "Sweet Prostitute," respectively.

<sup>108</sup> Farmer, Six Anonymous Plays, Second series, p. 182.

<sup>109</sup> Farmer, Six Anonymous Plays, Second series, p. 191.

<sup>110</sup> Farmer, Six Anonymous Plays, Second series, p. 426. Farmer is here speaking not only of Misogonus, but of the other plays in this volume. All the same, the comment is particularly apt regarding Misogonus.

<sup>111</sup> John S. Farmer, ed., The Dramatic Writings of Ulpian Fulwell (Guildford, England, 1966). Hereafter, this edition will be cited as Dramatic Writings of Fulwell.

"non-controversial moral,"<sup>112</sup> several of the lines spoken by Nichol Newfangle, the play's vice figure, indicate that Fulwell has intended him to be perceived as a Catholic. For example, the vice frequently swears "by the mass;"<sup>113</sup> and in his conversation with Lucifer, Newfangle says of the devil, "If our Lady of Walsingham had no fairer nose and visage/ By the mass, they were fools that would go to her on pilgrimage."<sup>114</sup> In this reference, Newfangle shows his familiarity with, and perhaps oblique approval of, pilgrimages to one of the English shrines that had been popular before the Reformation.<sup>115</sup>

Other references in the play indicate the author's attempts to denigrate England's great Catholic enemy Spain. For example, a minor character in Like Will to Like is a drunkard named Philip Fleming. Surely this name is intended to suggest comically that of Philip of Spain, whose army was currently engaged in fighting against rebels, including the Flemings, in the Low Countries. Although this is a political, rather than a religious,

<sup>112</sup>Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, III, p. 317

<sup>113</sup>Farmer, Dramatic Writings of Fulwell, pp. 7; 8; 51, etc.

<sup>114</sup>Farmer, Dramatic Writings of Fulwell, p. 7.

<sup>115</sup>Farmer identifies Walsingham as a place in England that was "famous over all Europe for the pilgrimages made to it." The Dramatic Writings of John Heywood, p. 274.

lampoon, it is worth noting that both Philip and the Flemings were Catholic. Furthermore, when Newfangle takes his leave of the audience at the end of the play, he says that he "must make a journey into Spain."<sup>116</sup> The implication is clearly that in Catholic Spain the vice, defeated in England, will find a haven.

Another play of this period, Thomas Preston's Cambises (1570),<sup>117</sup> also contains a vice figure who uses a number of allegedly Catholic oaths. Throughout the play, Ambidexter, the vice, swears "by the mass."<sup>118</sup> A specific anti-Catholic reference is found in Ambidexter's anachronistic comparison of the tyrant Cambises to Bishop Bonner, who had been instrumental in Queen Mary's persecution of Protestants:

What a king was he that hath used such tyranny!  
He was akin to Bishop Bonner, I think verily!  
For both their delights was to shed blood,  
But never intended to do any good.

This is an example of the deliberate use of anachronism not only to drive home a point forcefully with a familiar reference, but to show the historical unity of the struggle between good and evil.

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<sup>116</sup>Farmer, Dramatic Writings of Fulwell, p. 52.

<sup>117</sup>John Matthews Manly, ed., Specimens of the Pre-Shakspearean Drama, Vol. II (New York, 1897). Quotations from this edition will be identified parenthetically by line number in the text.

<sup>118</sup>For example, ll. 1146; 1179; etc. Ambidexter uses a great number of other such oaths.

An even more specifically anti-Catholic play is King Darius (1577),<sup>119</sup> described by Farmer as "a peculiarly insipid disputation, evidently anti-Papist."<sup>120</sup> Like many other controversial plays of the period, King Darius was written not only to lead the audience to the true faith, but also to denounce false religions.

The Protestant tone of King Darius is expressed briefly in Equity's lines:

Good thoughtes by fayth we doe obtayne,  
And by fayth we get our profyte and gayne.  
Through fayth so many as doe beleeve,  
Prosperous thoughts God will them geve.

(Sig. C i<sup>v</sup>)

The anti-Catholic aspect of the play is seen in Equity's prayer that God will save sinners from "their maliciousnesse,/ Their Papistry and all their covetousnesse" (Sig. C iii<sup>r</sup>) as well as his later urging Iniquity to

Call to Christ,  
The Lord most hiest,  
To save you from Antichrist.  
And his Papisticall lyne.

(Sig. E iii<sup>r</sup>)

Elsewhere, however, Iniquity claims to be himself the child of the pope who is described thus:

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<sup>119</sup>John S. Farmer, ed., King Darius, Tudor Facsimile Texts No. 34, (New York, 1970). This edition contains facsimiles of both the 1565 and 1577 printings of this play. I have referred to the 1577 edition. Quotations from this edition will be identified by page number in the text.

<sup>120</sup>Farmer, Anonymous Plays, Third series, p. 281.

In Rome he dwelleth, that is his common place,  
 Where all other bow before his face.  
 All Nations to him doe obay,  
 And never agayne him a prowde word dare say,  
 I warrant you his Landes are very great,  
 He doth pole pore men, and liveth by their sweate.

(Sig. E i<sup>r</sup>)

Later, he adds to his description of the pope that "All at his commandment are,/ And agaynst him, not more they dare" (Sig. E i<sup>v</sup>).

Swearing is quite common throughout King Darius, and, as usual, comes entirely from the mouths of the vices. Several oaths that might be called "Catholic" occur. Importunitie swears "by this breade," (Sig. C iii<sup>v</sup>) a reference to the Eucharist. Iniquitie swears "by the masse" (Sig. C iiii<sup>v</sup>) and "by sweete S. John" (Sig. D i<sup>v</sup>).

An important play in the morality style, although close in its concentration on the hero's sufferings to the tragedies of the 1590's is Nathanael Woodes's The Conflict of Conscience, published in 1581.<sup>121</sup> Based on the life of one Francesco Spera, The Conflict of Conscience tells the story of Philologus, a Protestant scholar who is subjected to persecution by the Church of Rome -- here represented by the figures of Hypocrisy, Avarice, Tyranny and others -- and submits to the authority of the Church,

<sup>121</sup> Nathanael Woodes, The Conflict of Conscience, ed. John S. Farmer, Tudor Facsimile Texts No. 54 (New York, 1970). For a critical examination of this play, see Celesta Wine, "Nathanael Wood's Conflict of Conscience," PMLA, L (1935), pp. 661-678.

partly because he is afraid of the power of the papacy and partly because he is seduced by Sensual Suggestion, who works on behalf of the Catholic Church, promising Philologus worldly happiness in exchange for his submission. Two endings exist for The Conflict of Conscience: in the first Philologus submits to the Church, but falls into a state of despair and commits suicide; in the alternate "happy" ending, Philologus, having submitted to Rome, then recants, returns to the Protestant faith and dies a happy man and is saved. To see the anti-Catholicism of A Conflict of Conscience, one has only to read the play, every scene of which preaches the Protestant view of man and criticizes what were perceived as the vices of the Catholic Church. To the development of the controversial drama, The Conflict of Conscience adds little that was not present in the plays of John Bale. Woodes's play is interesting, however, as an early example of Elizabethan tragedy, "hampered," as Celesta Wine notes, by the author's "theological inclinations and by the controversial nature of his subject."<sup>122</sup>

In Thomas Garter's The Most Virtuous and Godly Susanna (1578)<sup>123</sup> the vices exchange a great number of oaths and other coarse and vulgar expressions. Ill Report

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<sup>122</sup>Wine, "Nathanael Wood's Conflict of Conscience," p. 678.

<sup>123</sup>Thomas Garter, The Most Virtuous and Godly Susanna, ed. B. Ifor Evans and W. W. Greg, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1936).

is particularly noticeable because of his Catholic oaths such as "by the Masse"<sup>124</sup> and "by Sainte Megge."<sup>125</sup>

In the fragmentary Love Feigned and Unfeigned,<sup>126</sup> brief as it is, we find one specific anti-Catholic reference, when Falsehood describes himself: "I reigne as an Imperiall magystrate at rome/ I ame honored in all nations whersoe I come" (ll. 217-218).

Robert Wilson's The Three Ladies of London<sup>127</sup> contains a number of anti-Catholic references. The priest, Sir Peter Pleaseman, is an opportunist, changing his religion with the fashion. He says that he is, "of all religions . . . I have bene Catholicke, mary nowe for the most part a Protestant" (Sig. C iii<sup>v</sup>). While on the surface this is a satiric thrust at half-hearted Protestants, other lines indicate more clearly Wilson's anti-Catholic bias. The depiction of Simony is outstanding as an attack on Roman Catholicism. Simony who has been "conuersaunt with the Clergy beyond the Seas," (Sig. B i<sup>r</sup>) says that his

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<sup>124</sup>Garter, The Most Virtuous and Godly Susanna, l. 592 and l. 1362, for example.

<sup>125</sup>Garter, The Most Virtuous and Godly Susanna; l. 1352.

<sup>126</sup>Arundell Esdaile, ed., "Love Feigned and Unfeigned," Malone Society Collections, Part I (Oxford, 1907), pp. 17-25.

<sup>127</sup>John S. Farmer, ed., The Three Ladies of London, Tudor Facsimile Texts No. 55 (New York, 1970) Quotations from this edition will be identified parenthetically by page number in the text.

"birth, nurserie, and bringing up hitherto, hath bene in Rome, that auncient Religious Cittie" (Sig. B i<sup>v</sup>). There he had been banquetted he says, by "the Monkes and Fryers," who had averred that all their wealth and power had come from him (Sig. B i<sup>r</sup>). At Rome, Simony had heard of the wealth of England:

They would talk how England yearly sent ouer  
 a great masse of monie:  
 And that this little Iland was more worth  
 to the Pope,  
 Then three bigger Realmes, which had a great deale  
 more scope.  
 For here were smoke pence, Peter pence, and Powle  
 pence to be paid,  
 Besides muche other money that to the Popes use  
 was made.

(Sig. B ii<sup>r</sup>)

Simony here explains in passing that an earlier Pope had sent "Frier Austen" to England "with a great armie" to conquer England, and that the Pope then "erected lawes, hauing the people in subiection" (Sig. B ii<sup>r</sup>). Wilson's interpretation of English history here is, of course, fully in keeping with the views of orthodox Elizabethan historiographers such as Foxe. Wilson now proceeds from a Protestant interpretation of history to a reference to more recent events. He has Simony add that it has been twenty-six years since those tithes have been paid to the Pope, a reference to the elevation of Queen Elizabeth to the throne after the death of Queen Mary, who had, of course, been willing to pay the tithes.

Further anti-Catholic elements are found in Wilson's sequel, The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London.<sup>128</sup>

The author goes to some trouble in order to show that his vices are the products of Roman Catholic nations. Again, Simony is "a Roman" while Dissimulation is "a Mongrel, half an Italian, half a Dutchman"; Fraud is "half French and half Scottish"; Usury was "born in London" of "Jewish parents" (Sig. F 4<sup>r</sup>). Thus, all of Wilson's vices either are native to Catholic nations or have received their training in Catholic locales. Moreover, Simony says that he is more welcome in other countries than England, except "in Scotland and the Low Countries" because "they are reformed, they can not abide me" (Sig. D-i<sup>r</sup>). Later, Fraud and Usury decide that they would be more welcome in Spain than in England because in Spain "we and suche good fellowes are tollerated and used . . ." (Sig. F 4<sup>r</sup>). We have already seen such a retreat of a vice character into a safe haven in Catholic Spain in the departure for Spain of Newfangle at the end of Like Will to Like.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>128</sup> John S. Farmer, ed., The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London, Tudor Facsimile Texts No. 57. Quotations from this edition will be identified parenthetically by page number in the text.

<sup>129</sup> Farmer, Dramatic Writings of Fulwell, p. 52.

One passage in The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London, though its sense is obscure, clearly is anti-Catholic in intent. Simplicity says that he has a ballad for sale called "Chipping Norton a mile from Chapell othe heath, a lamentable ballad of burning the Popes dog" (Sig. C i<sup>r</sup>).<sup>130</sup> Whatever the literal meaning of this reference, it seems very likely to be a derisive remark, probably aimed at ridiculing some Catholic individual or institution of the Roman Catholic Church.

The anonymous play The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England (1591)<sup>131</sup> is an example of a play whose effectiveness - like that of John Bale's earlier dramatization of the life of this king - depends largely on the anti-Catholic sympathies of its audience. It is a propaganda play, like Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris with which it has some affinities.<sup>132</sup> The story the play tells is quite similar to that of Shakespeare's King John, but in its

<sup>130</sup>The exact meaning of this is unclear, to say the least. Could it be a reference to the papal bull of excommunication, the "Popes dog" being a bulldog?

<sup>131</sup>Geoffrey Bullough, ed., Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, Vol. IV (New York, 1966). Quotations from this edition of The Troublesome Reign will be identified parenthetically by line number in the text.

<sup>132</sup>Chambers points out that the authority of The Troublesome Reign was attributed to Marlowe by Malone, and that Fleay thought that the play had been written by others to a plot by Marlowe. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, p. 23.

main intent, it is closer to John Bale's King Johan.

As Geoffrey Bullough points out, the anonymous author of The Troublesome Reign "makes John a victim of clerical intrigue and French ambition. The Catholic clergy are his natural enemies, his exactions are excused, his seizure of their goods is made comic, with broad satire on their alleged unchastity; the story of his death by poison is given in detail."<sup>133</sup> Elsewhere, Bullough says that "the author's purpose was to modernize Bale's presentation of John as a pre-Reformation opponent of Church abuses and papal power and to use him as a mirror in which all would see the dangers of domestic dissension and foreign interference. Parallels were also drawn between the reigns - though not the characters - of John, Henry VIII and Elizabeth."<sup>134</sup> The focus in The Troublesome Reign, then, is on King John as the enemy of Rome. His struggle with the papacy is seen in the play as a foreshadowing of the Reformation.

The prologue, "To the Gentlemen Readers" says of King John that, "For Christs true faith indur'd he many a storme,/ And set himselfe against the Man of Rome . . ."

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<sup>133</sup>Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, IV, p. 6.

<sup>134</sup>Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, IV, p. 9. Bullough implies here that the author of The Troublesome Reign drew upon Bale's King Johan. W. W. Greg, on the other hand, finds it very unlikely "that the anonymous author should have been acquainted with Bale's manuscript." W. W. Greg, "Bale's Kynge Johan," Modern Language Notes, XXXVI (1921), p. 505.

(ll. 6-7).

Consistent with this conception of his central character, the author of The Troublesome Reign has King John speak several tirades against the Pope. John says to Bishop Pandulph: ". . . what hast thou or the Pope thy maister to doo to demaund of me, how I employ mine owne? Know Sir Priest . . . I scoerne to be subject to the greatest prelate in the world . . . never an Italian priest of them all, shall either have tythe, tole, or poling penie out of England, but as I am King, so wil I raigne next under God, supream head both over spirituall and temrall: and hee that contradicts me in this, Ile make him hoppe headlesse" (Part One, ll. 976-985). Later in the same scene, John says, "If the Pope will bee King in England, let him winne it with the sword, I know no other title he can alleage to mine inheritance" (Part One, ll. 989-991).

Later, in further rebellion against papal authority, John speaks these words:

The Arche proud titled Priest of Italy,  
 That calles himselfe grand Viccar under God  
 Is busied now with trentall obsequies,  
 Masse and months minde, dirge and I know not what  
 To ease their sowles in paineful purgatory,  
 That have miscaried in these bloody warres.  
 Heard you not Lords when first his holines  
 Had tidings of our small account of him,  
 How with a taunt vaunting upon his toes  
 He urgde a reason why the English Asse  
 Disdaigned the blessed ordinance of Rome?  
 The title (reverently might I inferre)  
 Became the Kings that earst have borne the load,  
 The slavish weight of that controlling Priest:  
 Who at his pleasure temperd them like waxe

To carrie armes on danger of his curse,  
 Banding their sowles with warrants of his hand,  
 I grieve to thinke how Kings in ages past  
 (Simply devoted to the Sea of Rome)  
 Have run into a thousand acts of shame.

(Part One, ll. 1460-1479)

John's attitude to Rome - a common enough one in Tudor England - was that an Englishman could not be loyal to both King and Pope. Hence, when he gives instructions for the sacking of the monasteries, he adds this imprecation:

. . . whatsoere he be within my Land,  
 That goes to Rome for justice and for law  
 While he may have his right within the Realme,  
 Let him be judgde a Traitor to the State,  
 And suffer as an enemie to England.

(Part One, ll. 1109-1113)

He calls on his lords elsewhere to arm themselves "against the Romaine pride" (Pt. I, l. 1134) and tells his followers to "Ransack the Abbeyes, Cloysters, Priories,/ Convert their coyne unto my souldiers use" (Part One, ll. 1107-1108).

This attack on the monasteries, besides being historically accurate, may have heightened for the Elizabethan theatre audience the parallel between King John's actions and those of Henry VIII. Moreover, it allowed for the most effective comic scene in The Troublesome Reign, that in which the Bastard personally supervises the sack of the Franciscan friary at Swinstead. This scene, written in the style of John Skelton, reveals the friars and nuns to

be nothing but a pack of hypocrites and lechers.<sup>135</sup>

This comic view of the Catholic clergy was quite in keeping with the popular English opinion. The same can be said of the scene in which the abbot gives absolution to the monk Thomas who is about to murder King John. The suggestion in the scene is that the regicide is a holy action in the eyes of the Catholics.

Historically, King John finally gave in to the authority of the pope. The hero of The Troublesome Reign does so, too, and as a result is weakened in heroic stature and kingly power. Dying, poisoned by a monk, John says that, "Since John did yeeld into the Priest of Rome,/ Nor he nor his have prospered on the earth . . . ." (Part Two, 11. 1075-1076). His dying prophecy, however, is this:

I am not he shall buyld the Lord a house,  
Or roote these Locusts from the face of earth:  
But if my dying heart deceave me not,  
From out these loynes shall spring a Kingly braunch  
Whose armes shall reach unto the gates of Rome,  
And with his feete treade down the Strumpets pride,  
That sits upon the chaire of Babylon.

(Part Two, 11. 1081-1087)

After John's death, the Bastard ends the play with a call for unity against the forces of the pope, "If Englands Peeres and people joyne in one,/ Nor Pope, nor Fraunce, nor Spaine can doo them wrong" (Part Two, 11.

<sup>135</sup>Bullough speculates that this scene might be either "transferred from an earlier play" or written as a parody of the Morality play manner. Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, IV, p. 14.

1195-1196).

In discussing The Troublesome Reign, Irving Ribner draws some interesting parallels between the events of that play and current events of the time the play appeared. He shows that:

A great fear of Elizabethan Englishmen was that powerful Catholic nobles might obey the papal bull which had excommunicated Elizabeth and had urged English Catholics to rise against her and support the designs of King Philip of Spain. In The Troublesome Reign this dreaded situation is deliberately paralleled when Essex, Pembroke, and Salisbury desert John and join the invading forces of Lewis of France. While they serve Lewis, England faces defeat; but when the rebellious nobles learn that service to a foreign power will only lead to their own destruction, and they return to the side of John, the English forces under Faulconbridge are able to remove the threat of defeat. The lesson of history is thus made clear to Elizabethan Englishmen. Rebellion against the crown, even if it appears to be in the cause of true religion, or if it is motivated by the king's tyranny . . . can only bring chaos and destruction to England.<sup>136</sup>

Another parallel that Ribner discovers between the action of The Troublesome Reign and Elizabethan affairs also relates to some of the religious controversies of the time. He points out that "both John and Elizabeth had shaky claims to the throne, and each was faced with a rival claimant whom a large part of the population favored

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<sup>136</sup> Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare, pp. 78-79.

and whose claim, moreover, was closely involved with the Catholic cause."<sup>137</sup> In The Troublesome Reign, John's nephew Arthur is supported as a candidate for the English throne by both Philip of France and the Pope. Ribner suggests that the author of this play intended to draw a parallel between Arthur and Mary Stuart, stressing in the play the "evils which sprang from the pursuit of Arthur's claim."<sup>138</sup>

The view of the Roman Catholic clergy presented in The Troublesome Reign as a thoroughly corrupt and hypocritical group is found in several other plays. The anonymous Lust's Dominion,<sup>139</sup> attributed, almost certainly falsely, to Marlowe, is a play in which the corruption of the Roman Catholic clergy is taken for granted and, in fact, forms part of the basic plot of the play. One of the themes of the play is the false rumor that Prince Philip of Spain is a bastard and therefore not the proper claimant to the throne. This rumor originates with the Queen Mother herself, and Eleazor, the Moorish "Prince of Fesse and Barbary" with whom she is in love. The Queen Mother enlists the aid of two corrupt friars, Crab and Cole, and of

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<sup>137</sup>Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare, p. 80.

<sup>138</sup>Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare, p. 80.

<sup>139</sup>J. Le Gay Brereton, ed., Lust's Dominion, or The Lascivious Queen (Vaduz, Germany, 1965). Quotations from this edition will be identified parenthetically by line number in the text.

Cardinal Mendoza. The Queen Mother claims that she had been raped by the Cardinal, who supports her story, hoping thereby to marry the Queen Mother and ascend to the throne. Mendoza calls to mind the vice figure Infidelity of the earlier Lusty Juventus with all his sacramentals, as he offers to

. . . make amends with marriage,  
And satisfie with Trentalls, dirges, praiers,  
The offended spirit of the wronged King.

(ll. 2997-2999)

All of this demonstrates for the Tudor audiences the hypocrisy and superstition of the Roman hierarchy. Earlier in the play, Mendoza, vowing revenge against Eleazor, presents an even more typical Elizabethan stage cardinal, as, like Pandolph in The Troublesome Reign, he threatens with the authority of the Church:

. . . by Peters Chair,  
Mendoza vows revenge. Ile lay aside  
My Cardinals hat, and in a wall of steel  
The glorious livery of a souldier; fight for  
my late lost honour

. . . . .  
King, thou shalt be no King for wronging me,  
The Pope shall send his bulls through all thy Realm,  
And pull obedience from thy Subjects hearts,  
To put on armour of the Mother Church,  
Curses shall fall like lightnings on your heads:  
Bell, book and candle, holy water, praiers,  
Shall all chime vengeance to the court of Spain  
Till they have power to conjure down that fiend;  
That damned Moor, that Devil that Lucifer,  
That dares aspire the staffe the Card'nall swaid.

(ll. 725-729; 731-744)

Another detail of Lust's Dominion which recalls The

Troublesome Reign is that the two corrupt friars, Crab and Cole, in the third scene of Act II, speak in jingling verses reminiscent of the monastery scene in The Troublesome Reign of King John.

An anti-Catholic play that emphasizes contemporary political problems is The Misfortunes of Arthur, written by Thomas Hughes, Francis Bacon, Christopher Yelverton, William Fulbecke and others, which was printed in 1587.<sup>140</sup> One of the rare sixteenth century dramatizations of Arthurian legend, it is commonly believed to portray aspects of religious controversy. Irving Ribner, in The English History Play, says that in this play the character of Mordred is depicted as "a general symbol of all Catholic Englishmen who might be tempted to join in the attempt against Elizabeth."<sup>141</sup> Gertrude Reese offers a more specific interpretation of The Misfortunes of Arthur, finding that Arthur and Mordred represent Queen Elizabeth and Mary of Scotland respectively, and sees the play as an attempt to justify Elizabeth's treatment of Mary.<sup>142</sup>

A play in which anti-Catholic barbs are used as

<sup>140</sup>Thomas Hughes, Francis Bacon, et al., The Misfortunes of Arthur, ed., John S. Farmer. Tudor Facsimile Texts No. 56 (New York, 1970).

<sup>141</sup>Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare, p. 234.

<sup>142</sup>Gertrude Reese, "Political Import of The Misfortunes of Arthur," Review of English Studies, XXI (1945), No. 82, pp. 81-91.

comic relief is George Peele's Edward I (1593).<sup>143</sup> Running through the play are a series of jokes about the lechery of friars; typical of these is Mortimer's couplet, "He must needs go that the diavel drives,/ Then Frier beware of other mens wives" (ll. 1381-1382). Peele presents a lecherous friar as one of his minor characters, the Welshman Hugh ap Davis, who is shown travelling with his wench, Guenthian. Regarding this pair, Lluellan says, "True man, true friar, true priest, and true knave,/ These foure in one this trull shall have" (ll. 321-322).

Most of the humor regarding friars is irrelevant to the main plot of Edward I; more significant is Edward's decision that he and his brother should disguise themselves as friars and go to hear Queen Elinor's confession. In doing this, they take pains to convince the Queen that she

. . . need not dread our conference,  
Who by the order of the holy Church,  
Are all annoynted to sacred secrecie.

(ll. 2454-2456)

They are surprised, however, when the Queen tells them that

. . . Jone of Acon the supposed child,  
And daughter of my Lord the English King,  
Is basely born begotten of a Frier . . . .

(ll. 2492-2494)

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<sup>143</sup> Frank S. Hook, ed., Edward I in The Dramatic Works of George Peele, Charles Tyler Prouty, general editor (New Haven, 1961). Quotations from this edition will be identified parenthetically by line number in the text.

This scene can be regarded as anti-Catholic, not only because of its climax which reveals yet another example of clerical concupiscence, but because of the treatment of the sacrament of penance, which Protestant theologians generally regarded as an institution of the papacy rather than of Christ, established in order to give the clergy greater power over the members of their Church.

In Edward I, Peele's anti-Catholicism is merely comic relief, although the Queen's confession is important to the plot. In The Battle of Alcazar,<sup>144</sup> however, Peele's anti-Catholicism is intrinsic to much of the action of the play. Much of the drama is concerned with Sir Thomas Stukeley, the English adventurer, who is shown as taking part in a military expedition commissioned by Pope Gregory VII to conquer Ireland, "And so restore it to the Romane faith" (l. 441). Stukeley is depicted as a traitor to England, admitting no obligation to his native land. Soon, however, Sebastian, the King of Portugal, is able to convince Stukeley of the futility of attempting a sea attack on any of Queen Elizabeth's territories, and the adventurer agrees to throw over the pope's commission and to fight for Portugal instead. Thus, Stukeley is presented as one who is incapable of remaining loyal to any one cause or leader,

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<sup>144</sup>W. W. Greg, ed., The Battle of Alcazar, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1906). Quotations from this edition will be identified by line number in the text.

a view that many Englishmen of this period held regarding Catholics.

Although Stukeley is a dashing opportunist and fickle in his loyalties, the single loyalty that he seems to maintain throughout the play is to Roman Catholic leaders. Even though he casts aside the Pope's commission, Stukeley remains evidently a Catholic; in doing this, he is not rejecting the Pope as head of the Church, but questioning the pontiff's wisdom in military affairs. Yet Stukeley always seems to gravitate toward Catholic patrons, even though he does not seem to have too great a respect for the Catholic clergy, referring to the Bishop of Ireland, as he does, as "The reuerent lordly bishop of saint Asses" (l. 474). Stukeley's biography, as he himself outlines it, shows him to have been a favorite of King Philip of Spain, although he had to leave Spain because of a quarrel with a bishop; then he went to Rome where the Pope named him "Marquis of Ireland."<sup>145</sup> Plainly, Stukeley is highly regarded by Catholic leaders wherever he goes. If there is any contradiction in his character, particularly in his simultaneous loyalty to and disloyalty to the Church, it is probably deliberate; Peele evidently wished to depict a Catholic villain who was incapable of remaining loyal even to the Pope; that this makes for dramatic inconsistency cannot be denied, but it

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<sup>145</sup> Stukeley reminisces about his past life just before his death, ll. 1456-1488.

seems to be a defect inherent in Peele's intention.

In spite of the apparent inconsistency of Stukeley's character, The Battle of Alcazar is an entertaining play, full of action, in which the anti-Catholic theme is subsidiary to the main action but important because it provides the motivation for Sir Thomas Stukeley. We have already seen that the Elizabethans believed that one could not be a Roman Catholic and a loyal Englishman at the same time. In Sir Thomas Stukeley, we may safely assume, Peele was attempting to epitomize the contradiction implied in these two loyalties, and to show that, as a Roman Catholic, Stukeley had repudiated his claim to being an Englishman, or, indeed, a citizen of any country.

A contemporary of Peele, Robert Greene, whose Spanish Masquerado we have already examined, also introduced anti-Catholic elements into his plays. None of Greene's dramas is as strongly anti-papal as was the Spanish Masquerado; for the most part, Greene's attacks on the Church of Rome are slight barbs, incidental to the main themes of his plays. For example, when, in Alphonsus, King of Aragon,<sup>146</sup> the witch Medea conjures up the demon Calchas, he appears "in a white surplice and a Cardinals Myter" (s.d. 869). In Selimus, the titular character, a Moslem,

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<sup>146</sup>Grosart, The Works of Robert Greene. Greene's plays appear in volumes 13 and 14 of this edition. All quotations from these plays will be identified parenthetically by line number in the text.

describes one of his Christian enemies on the battlefield:

Here the Polonian he comes hurtling in  
Vnder the conduct of some forraine prince,  
To fight in honour of his crucifix!

(ll. 472-474)

This is a sly attack on supposed Catholic idolatry. A minor character, Bullithrubble the shepherd, who appears late in Selimus, also affords Greene an opportunity for denouncing Catholic superstition and idolatry. When questioned about his name, Bullithrubble answers: "If you wil not beleeeue me, I wil bring my godfathers and godmothers, and they shal swear it vpon the fontstone, and vpon the church booke too, where it is written" (ll. 1889-1893). Evidently Greene is here denouncing Catholics for swearing oaths on such objects as baptismal fonts and church record books rather than by the name of God. We may note in passing that Bullithrubble uses such oaths as "Marry" (l. 1807 and elsewhere) and "Masse" (l. 1893). In Greene's biblical play, A Looking Glasse for London and England (1594), about the sins and salvation of Nineveh, Jonas speaks these words in the epilogue:

Repent O London, least, for thine offence,  
Thy shepheard faile, whom mightie God preserue,  
That she may bide the pillar of his Church  
Against the stormes of Romish Antichrist.

(ll. 2281-2284)

In Greene's comedy, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, David Bevington sees "Margaret's renunciation of a nun's livery"

as "inevitably a triumph for anti-Catholic audiences."<sup>147</sup> Although Greene has no primarily anti-Catholic play, many of his dramatic writings contain some slight amount of anti-Catholic material.

In discussing the English drama of the late 1580's and early 1590's, we cannot avoid examining the plays of Shakespeare. A great deal has been written regarding Shakespeare and his attitude toward the Catholic Church, much of it centering around the question of whether or not Shakespeare was himself a Catholic.<sup>148</sup> Without entering into the controversy over that question, I will concentrate on the question of whether there is any anti-Catholic material in his earliest plays.

An examination of Shakespeare's plays indicates that the only hint of explicit religious propagandizing is found in the first two parts of Henry VI in which the author attacks the corruption of the clergy and lampoons Catholic credulity and superstition.<sup>149</sup>

The attack on the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the

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<sup>147</sup>Bevington, Tudor Drama and Politics, p. 224.

<sup>148</sup>See, for example, John Henry De Groot, The Shakespeares and "The Old Faith" (New York, 1946); Gerald M. Greenewald, Shakespeare's Attitude Towards the Catholic Church in "King John" (Washington, D.C., 1938); and H. Mutschmann and K. Wentersdorf, Shakespeare and Catholicism (New York, 1952).

<sup>149</sup>G. B. Harrison, ed., Shakespeare, The Complete Works (New York, 1952). Quotations from this edition will be identified parenthetically by act, scene and line numbers in the text.

first two parts of Henry VI concentrates on the career and character of the Bishop of Winchester, who becomes Cardinal Beaufort in the last act of part one. Since Winchester is the only clergyman who appears in part one and ~~the~~ only one of any rank in part two, he may be taken to represent the author's opinion of the Catholic hierarchy. He is shown as ambitious, self-seeking and corrupt, sharing the vices of the symbolic Catholic clergymen of Tudor interludes and plays so that he clearly is a part of the tradition that reaches from the plays of Bale through the Tudor interludes into the plays of the 1590's.

Early in the first part of Henry VI, Winchester privately vows that

. . . long I will not be Jack out of office.  
The king from Eltham I intend to steal  
And sit at chiefest stern of public weal.

(I.i.175-177)

Winchester's personal ambition is recognized by the other courtiers. The Duke of Exeter recalls that King Henry V had once prophesied of Winchester, "If once he come to be a cardinal, / He'll make his cap coequal with the crown" (V.i.32-33). In the second part of Henry VI, Salisbury says of Winchester, now Cardinal Beaufort:

Oft have I seen the haughty Cardinal,  
More like a soldier than a man o' the Church,  
As stout and proud as he were lord of all,  
Swear like a ruffian and demean himself  
Unlike the ruler of a commonweal.

(I.i.185-189)

Although this depiction of Winchester's ambition and worldliness might be meant by the author to characterize an individual rather than condemn a class, certain speeches and incidents in the first part of Henry VI demonstrate that Winchester represents the Catholic hierarchy in much the same way that the worldly and corrupt clergy of The Troublesome Reign of King John had done. Gloucester, in a speech condemning Winchester as a traitor, addresses him as "Thou that givest whores indulgences to sin . . ." (I.iii.35). This links the characterization of Winchester with one of the central Lutheran controversies. Elsewhere, Gloucester describes Winchester in terms reminiscent of the clergy of Tudor interludes:

. . . Such is thy audacious wickedness,  
 Thy lewd, pestiferous and dissentious pranks,  
 As very infants prattle of thy pride.  
 Thou art a most pernicious usurer,  
 Froward by nature, enemy to peace,  
 Lascivious, wanton, more than well beseems  
 A man of thy profession and degree.

(III.i.14-20)

Elsewhere Shakespeare plays on another point of propaganda by showing Winchester as a simoniac whose cardinalate is purchased rather than merited. He is shown giving a Papal Legate

The sum of money which I promised  
 Should be delivered to His Holiness  
 For clothing me in these grave ornaments.

(V.1.52-54)

Moreover, the Cardinal's own disparaging reference here to

his robes as "ornaments" must have appealed to the Protestant view that Roman Catholic ritual was merely impressive outward show without true significance.

On several occasions, evidently referring to Winchester, King Henry condemns dissentious clergymen, once decrying "holy churchmen" who "take delight in broils" (III. i.111), and later condemning religious controversy, saying that,

It was both impious and unnatural  
That such immanity and bloody strife  
Should reign among professors of one faith.

(V.i.12-14)

In the general context of the first part of Henry VI, where the Catholic clergy are condemned for ambition, simony, and other vices, the author's voice seems to come through the character of Gloucester in his condemnations of the Bishop of Winchester. When he addresses Winchester in the following words, Gloucester expresses the probable emotions of the Elizabethan audience:

Priest, beware your beard!  
I mean to tug it and to cuff you soundly.  
Under my feet I stamp thy cardinal's hat.  
In spite of Pope or dignities of Church,  
Here by the cheeks I'll drag thee up and down.

(I.iii.47-51)

This speech echoes not only the ideas but the tone of countless other speeches in plays of the 1580's such as The Troublesome Reign and in Marlowe's Edward the Second and The Massacre at Paris.

The treatment of Joan la Pucelle and the French in

the first part of Henry VI shows a distinct anti-Catholic bias. Joan is depicted as a witch who plays upon the superstition and credulity of the gullible French Catholics in order to accomplish the devil's plan of defeating the English Protestants.

That Joan is a witch as Talbot claims (III.ii.38) is clear from her invocation of the fiends in the third scene of act five. She refers to these devils as "choice spirits that admonish" her and grant her "signs of future accidents" (V.iii.3-4). She calls them "speedy helpers that are substitutes/ Under the lordly monarch of the North . . ." (V.iii.5-6). In the past, she has allowed these familiar spirits to drink her blood and at this point is willing to "lop a member off" and give it to them "In earnest of a further benefit . . ." (V.iii.14-16). Her evil nature is emphasized by the fact that Joan's last words in the play, as she goes off to her death, are a curse upon the English who have condemned her (V.iv.86-91).

Throughout the play, Joan encourages the French Catholics in beliefs and behavior that the Protestants of Shakespeare's time must have considered idolatrous. The Bastard of Orleans presents her at the French court as a prophetess having powers "Exceeding the nine sybils of old Rome" (I.ii.56). Significantly, her abilities are compared to those of pagan soothsayers rather than the Biblical

prophets. Joan herself, having demonstrated her power by recognising the true Dauphin, claims to have had "a vision full of majesty" in which "God's mother" appeared to her (I.ii.78-79).

The French, through their credulity, come to regard Joan in a manner that the Elizabethan audience can only have regarded as idolatrous or blasphemous. When, with Joan's help, the French are able to raise the siege of Orleans, the Dauphin speaks of La Pucelle as if she were divine:

. . . all the priests and friars in my realm  
 Shall in procession sing her endless praise.  
 A statelier pyramis to her I'll rear  
 Than Rhodope's or Memphis' ever was.  
 In memory of her when she is dead,  
 Her ashes, in an urn more precious  
 Than the rich-jeweled coffer of Darius,  
 Transported shall be at high festivals  
 Before the kings and queens of France.  
 No longer on Saint Denis will we cry,  
 But Joan La Pucelle shall be France's saint.

(I.vi.19-29)

Later in the play, the same theme is touched upon when Alencon says to Joan, "We'll set thy statue in some holy place/ And have thee reverenced like a blessed saint . . ." (III.iii.14-15). If the English Reformation looked upon the veneration of the saints as idolatry and superstition, such reverence toward a living person must have approached blasphemy. In the context of this play, the blasphemy must have seemed even more heinous since the object of this

eneration was a minion of Satan.

One episode in the first part of Henry VI casts scorn upon Catholic practice and belief. A French general says that

Ten thousand French have ta'en the sacrament  
To rive their dangerous artillery  
Upon no Christian soul but English Talbot.

(IV.ii.28-30)

Here, the Catholics are shown using the sacrament of the Eucharist as a form of magic to be employed against an English hero. For the English Protestant audience, who would have regarded the Eucharist as a merely symbolic ceremony, this episode demonstrated the superstition of Catholics.

In a comic episode of the second part of Henry VI Catholic belief in miracles is ridiculed. A peasant named Simpcox is brought before the King, claiming to have been blind all his life and to have been miraculously cured after he had been called in his sleep by a voice that urged him to offer at Saint Alban's Shrine. The Duke of Gloucester easily shows that Simpcox is a fraud and has the man whipped by the town beadle (II.i.68-152). The only purpose that this scene serves in the play is to lampoon the idea of shrines, mysterious voices and miraculous cures. All of these, of course, are more related to Catholic rather than Protestant beliefs. To the Protestants, such things would

have been regarded as idolatrous and means only of gulling the ignorant and superstitious.<sup>150</sup>

In discussing the first two parts of Henry VI, we may wonder, since these plays are sometimes thought to be collaborations between Shakespeare and other playwrights, to what extent the anti-Catholic portions can be attributed to Shakespeare himself. A good argument can be made for attributing the anti-Catholic segments of these plays to another author on the basis of the fact that nowhere else in his plays does Shakespeare attack the Church of Rome in this manner. In general, in fact, Shakespeare tends to treat the Catholic clergy very sympathetically; we may think, for example, of the humane Friar Laurence in Romeo and Juliet or the chaste novice Isabella in Measure for Measure. Even when the subject matter of a play seems to demand anti-Catholic propaganda, Shakespeare seems remarkably reserved for his time. Even in King John, Shakespeare plays down the anti-Catholic theme latent in the material and so prominent in his source, The Troublesome Reign of King John.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Geoffrey Bullough suggests that the source of this episode was the 1583 edition of Foxe's Actes and Monuments, from which he reprints the relevant portions. Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, III, 126-128.

<sup>151</sup> For comparison of King John with The Troublesome Reign of King John, see Bullough, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare, IV, 9-22. See also De Groot, The Shakespeares and "The Old Faith", pp. 180-223, for his comments on King John. It is interesting to note that

To this point, we have examined the anti-Catholic element in plays that were acted or published during Christopher Marlowe's lifetime in an attempt to demonstrate that hatred of the Roman Catholic Church provided an important theme in the theatre for which Marlowe wrote his plays. From the point of view of what influence other playwrights and the mood of the contemporary theatre might have had upon Marlowe, the date of his death is, of course, a necessary stopping point. But the anti-Catholic drama did not come to an end at the time of Marlowe's death.

Many plays were written during the remaining years of Queen Elizabeth's reign which can be called anti-Catholic. For example, in The Weakest Goeth to the Wall,<sup>152</sup> one of the central characters is Sir Nicholas, a French priest, who is depicted as ignorant, a drunkard, lecherous and avaricious. Again, in Anthony Munday's The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington (1597),<sup>153</sup> and its sequel, The

Gerard M. Greenwald points out that there is no evidence of a post-Shakespearean stage presentation of King John before 1737. He infers from this fact that the play was considered to be too pro-Catholic. Greenwald also points out that in 1747, Colley Cibber's Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John appeared. This was Cibber's adaptation of Shakespeare's play, in which the adaptor emphasized the anti-Catholic potential of the subject matter. Greenwald, Shakespeare's Attitude Towards the Catholic Church in "King John," pp. 45-49.

<sup>152</sup> W. Greg, ed., The Weakest Goeth to the Wall, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1912.)

<sup>153</sup> Anthony Munday, The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington, ed. John C. Meagher, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1964). Hereafter this play will be identified in the notes as The Downfall of Huntington.

Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington (1598),<sup>154</sup> the anti-Catholic theme is introduced into a pair of plays about Robin Hood. In Munday's version of the familiar legends, Robin Hood and his men are presented as more or less Protestant heroes, sworn to defend the poor against the Catholic clergy,<sup>155</sup> and Robin Hood is described as having advised King Richard to tax the clergy to pay for a crusade.<sup>156</sup> King John appears in these plays and, although he is less the fiery figure that he was in The Troublesome Reign, he can be counted on for anti-clerical comment.<sup>157</sup>

Most of the anti-Catholicism here is directed against those clergymen who mix themselves in affairs of state, such as the Bishop of York and the Bishop of Ely. Catholic nuns are mentioned as sexual objects for both Robin Hood's men<sup>158</sup> and for the bishops.<sup>159</sup> Even Friar Tuck is depicted as a purveyor of Roman Catholic objects of superstitious veneration.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Anthony Munday, The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington, ed. John G. Meagher, Malone Society Reprints (Oxford, 1967).

<sup>155</sup> Munday, The Downfall of Huntington, ll. 1354-1355.

<sup>156</sup> Munday, The Downfall of Huntington, ll. 1393-1397.

<sup>157</sup> Munday, The Downfall of Huntington, ll. 543; 672, e.g.

<sup>158</sup> Munday, The Downfall of Huntington, l. 1288.

<sup>159</sup> Munday, The Downfall of Huntington, ll. 1465-1466.

<sup>160</sup> Munday, The Downfall of Huntington, ll. 830-831.

During the reign of James I, the anti-Catholic tradition continued on the stage. Among many examples that might be mentioned are Barnabe Barnes's The Devil's Charter (1607),<sup>161</sup> which deals with the life and career of Pope Alexander VI, the Borgia pope, who is shown as having obtained the papacy through a bargain with the devil.<sup>162</sup> Another lurid, anti-Catholic play of this period is Thomas Dekker's The Whore of Babylon (1607),<sup>163</sup> which treats allegorically the old Protestant theme of the corrupt and illicit power of the Church of Rome.

Two other anti-Catholic plays, based on topical events appeared in the time of James I. The first of these was Ben Jonson's Catiline His Conspiracy (1611), which was written as a comment on the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, using the story of Catiline's conspiracy as a classical parallel to modern events, and through this parallel, condemning the Catholic faction in England.<sup>164</sup> In 1624, Thomas Middleton

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<sup>161</sup>Barnabe Barnes, The Devil's Charter, ed., John S. Farmer, Tudor Facsimile Texts No. 121 (New York, 1970).

<sup>162</sup>Barnes, The Devil's Charter, Sig. A 2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>163</sup>Fredson Bowers, ed., The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker, Vol. II (Cambridge, 1964).

<sup>164</sup>C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, ed., Ben Jonson, Vol. V (Oxford, 1937). For a full explanation of the parallel to the gunpowder plot, see B. N. De Luna, Jonson's Romish Plot: A Study of Catiline and its Historical Context (Oxford, 1967).

published A Game at Chess, which was written to attack the proposed marriage of Prince Charles to a Spanish Catholic. Here, Middleton used the image of a chess game to depict contemporary events, with the white pieces representing Englishmen and the black ones representing the Spaniards, who are shown as dominated by the power of the Catholic Church.<sup>165</sup>

Having established that there was a continuing element of anti-Catholicism in the Elizabethan theatre, we may now turn to the works of Christopher Marlowe to see in what ways he also utilized this theme.

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<sup>165</sup>A. H. Bullen, The Works of Thomas Middleton, Vol. VII (New York, 1964). For expositions of Middleton's allegory in A Game at Chess, see Dorothy M. Farr, Thomas Middleton and the Drama of Realism: A Study of Some Representative Plays (Edinburgh, 1973), pp. 98-124; David M. Holmes, The Art of Thomas Middleton: A Critical Study (Oxford, 1970), pp. 185-193; and John Robert Moore, "The Contemporary Significance of Middleton's Game at Chess," PMLA, L (1935), pp. 761-768.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MARLOWE'S ANTI-CATHOLICISM

We have seen that there was a tradition of anti-Catholic polemic in the English theatre in the time of Queen Elizabeth I. It is in no way surprising that the plays of Christopher Marlowe, partaking as they do of many literary and theatrical conventions of the period, should also reflect the English Protestant hatred of the Church of Rome which marked so much of the period's intellectual activity. In each of Marlowe's plays, with two exceptions, we find anti-Catholic elements; the exceptions are The Tragedy of Dido, which Marlowe and Thomas Nashe adapted from Virgil's Aeneid, and the first part of Tamburlaine, where, as we shall see, there is evidence of Marlowe's at least having drawn upon an anti-Catholic author as a literary source. What is more interesting than the mere presence of polemical materials in Marlowe's plays, however, is the manner in which the author makes use of these elements. At times the anti-Catholic element is used gratuitously, merely as propaganda or as a means of stirring up the emotions of the audience against a familiar enemy; at other times, however, Marlowe uses his audience's anti-Catholic

bias as a means of defining characters and of establishing the proper audience response toward those characters and the actions depicted in his plays. This latter technique is used especially in The Jew of Malta, where, it would seem, an understanding of the anti-Catholic element of the play is necessary for a full understanding of Marlowe's intentions.

Any attempt to impose a rigid chronology upon Marlowe's plays must ultimately indulge in arbitrary choices. Therefore, instead of attempting to deal with these plays chronologically, I will examine them for signs of anti-Catholicism, beginning with Marlowe's single undoubtedly polemical play, The Massacre at Paris; next, I will briefly examine Edward the Second because of its evident relationship with The Massacre at Paris. After this, I will follow a more traditional order in looking at Marlowe's plays, beginning with the two parts of Tamburlaine, followed by an examination of the two published versions of Doctor Faustus, and finally I will analyse the anti-Catholicism of The Jew of Malta. In following this admittedly arbitrary order, I am beginning my consideration of Marlowe's anti-Catholicism with a play that is almost entirely dependent upon the politics of anti-Catholicism for its matter, followed by a number of plays which make incidental use of anti-Catholic elements and ending with another play in which Marlowe makes extensive use of English hatred of the Church of Rome in establishing

his dramatic structure.

No one would deny that The Massacre at Paris is a propaganda play. It is a blatantly chauvinistic English Protestant account of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of 1572, in which French Catholics, under the leadership of the Duke of Guise and his faction, had murdered large numbers of Huguenots.

By any critical standards, The Massacre at Paris is Marlowe's least successful play. The characters are uniformly flat, at times almost suggesting the allegorical impersonality of the figures in some of the Tudor interludes. But in spite of this suggestion of kinship with earlier English drama, none of Marlowe's pasteboard characters here seems consistently to represent any particular qualities or conceptions. Although the Duke of Guise, who is as much as anyone the central character of the play, appears at times somewhat deeper and more interesting than the other characters, he is really only a manifestation of the conventional Machiavellian villain of Elizabethan drama and a derivation from the characterizations of the devils in the English morality plays.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For the history of this type of character, see A. P. Rossiter, Angel with Horns, and Other Shakespeare Lectures, ed. Graham Storey, (New York, 1961); Wyndham Lewis, The Lion and the Fox: The Role of the Hero in the Plays of Shakespeare (New York, 1966); Bernard Spivack, Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: The History of a Metaphor in Relation to His Major Villains (New York, 1958); Edward Meyer, Machiavelli and the Elizabethan Stage (New York, 1964).

The play's dialogue is written in a verse that is plain and functional rather than ornamental, unlike most of Marlowe's other dramatic verse. Some critics have taken the bare style of this play's dialogue as an indication either that the play was written hurriedly, or that the text as we know it is a drastic reduction of the original, cut down to the merest essentials of plot.<sup>2</sup> Whichever view may be correct, the fact remains that most critics have found The Massacre at Paris artistically disappointing, particularly in comparison with Marlowe's other, greater plays. There is no doubt, however, according to John Bakeless and C. F. Tucker Brooke, that the play is Marlowe's own work.<sup>3</sup>

But in spite of the artistic crudities of the play as we know it, The Massacre at Paris must have been highly effective, exciting melodrama in 1593, with its fast-moving, complex and violent action, including numerous murders, many of them acted out in full view of the spectators, and with its emotional appeals to the religious and political sympathies of the audience. Although John Bakeless feels that the play enjoyed only "limited success . . . in its

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<sup>2</sup>Brooke, The Works of Christopher Marlowe, p. 441; Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, p. 201. All quotations from Marlowe's plays will be taken from Tucker Brooke's edition and will be identified parenthetically by line number in the text.

<sup>3</sup>Brooke, Works of Christopher Marlowe, pp. 441-442; Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, p. 199; Bakeless, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, II, p. 167.

own day,"<sup>4</sup> Frederic Boas says that The Massacre at Paris found "a ready response in the theatre" and enjoyed "continued popularity throughout the Queen's reign."<sup>5</sup> It is not difficult to account for this popularity. Although Bakeless finds the play "crude, violent, gory, relieved by vivid and sometimes poetic interludes between assassinations,"<sup>6</sup> he admits that the play's contemporary success was "due to its liberal use of a peculiarly Elizabethan variety of 'hokum' and its appeal to national and religious prejudice."<sup>7</sup> Boas, too, believes that the play was popular primarily because of the character of Navarre's "outspoken Protestant sentiments combined with Henry III's sympathetic references to Elizabeth and England."<sup>8</sup> Briefly, the key to the play's popularity, aside from its intrinsic melodramatic effectiveness, lies in its thematic content, which Arthur Symonds described as "fierce anti-Papal feeling inflamed to rabidness by the horrors of S. [sic] Bartholomew."<sup>9</sup>

As in most propagandistic writing, right and wrong

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<sup>4</sup>Bakeless, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, II, p. 98.

<sup>5</sup>Boas, Christopher Marlowe, p. 167.

<sup>6</sup>Bakeless, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, II, p. 97.

<sup>7</sup>Bakeless, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, II, p. 98.

<sup>8</sup>Boas, Christopher Marlowe, p. 167.

<sup>9</sup>John Addington Symonds, Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama (New York, 1968), p. 662.

are clearly distinguished in The Massacre at Paris. From the very beginning of the play, the Catholics are shown to be a party of villains. The Duke of Guise and his followers are all worthless Machiavellians, and even those members of the Catholic party who seek reconciliation with the Protestants are weak and helpless against the machinations of the Guise. When King Henry III finally takes decisive action against the Duke of Guise it is because the Duke is becoming a threat to Henry's possession of the throne, not because of his actions against the Protestants. On the other hand, Marlowe presents his Protestant characters as absolutely virtuous. They are honest and straightforward, while the Catholics are dishonest and guileful, gentle while the Catholics are violent and cruel, and saintly while the Catholics are diabolical. The only surprising thing is that such a simple-mindedly orthodox play should have come from the pen of a playwright of the stature and reputation of Christopher Marlowe.

One fact that renders the play unique among Marlowe's works, and which may account in part for the general absence of the flamboyantly "romantic" element usually found in Marlowe's dramatic verse, is that it is the only play which Marlowe wrote about the real events of his own time. This fact may have prevented his imagination from making The Massacre at Paris as exotic in tone and style as his other

plays. This is also Marlowe's only play in which any of the central characters is presented explicitly as Protestant. Whether this, as well as the fact that Marlowe was writing outright propaganda, rendered the play less colorful than his other productions we cannot say. At any rate, perhaps because of its contemporaneity and its polemical character, The Massacre at Paris is Marlowe's least "poetic" drama.

But if we go to The Massacre at Paris in search of conventional poetic drama, we are probably mistaking Marlowe's intention; the play was not written as poetry but as propaganda, and as propaganda it is a very skillful piece of work. Marlowe here presents a theme of great contemporary relevance to his original audience, depicting the conventional opposition between Protestants and Catholics in the framework of a fast-moving, fairly exciting story. In the course of telling his tale of bloodshed, Marlowe skillfully manipulates his plot, characters and the issues presented by them to exploit the sympathies and antipathies of his audience, as well as to stir up some of their deepest fears. We have already seen that Elizabethan England lived in fear of attacks from the great Catholic military powers and believed that if England were to be conquered by any of the Catholic nations she would be delivered into the powers of the papacy. The defeat of the Armada, it is true, had partially allayed any immediate fear of an invasion,

but the memories of that danger must have remained for some time. In creating The Massacre at Paris, Marlowe was not inventing a fantastical extravaganza set in an obscure land and in a distant time; he was writing about events of recent history, depicting well-known public figures, some of them, such as Henry IV of France, the Navarre of the play, still alive when the play was performed. The English audience of 1593 may be thought to have feared the villains of The Massacre at Paris almost as much as they did the devils in Doctor Faustus.

One of the most powerful villains in The Massacre at Paris never appears on the stage, but nevertheless he makes his presence felt throughout the play. This, of course, is the Pope, who, Marlowe takes great pains to show, is constantly present in spirit, behind the scenes, manipulating the Catholic characters and lending them a special kind of support which allows them to perform the most inhuman actions without fear of any moral retribution. Throughout the play the Catholics justify the worst of their excesses by invoking the authority of the Pope.

"One Catholic who seems certainly to have the Pope's sanction in his anti-Protestant persecutions is the Duke of Guise, a scheming Catholic whose principal loyalty is to Rome and of whom the Prince of Condy says, "what he doth the Pope will ratifie:/ In murder, mischeefe, or in tiranny"

(ll. 40-41). When the Guise claims, "What I haue done tis for the Gospell sake" (l. 833), Epernouve replies, "Nay for the Popes sake, and thine owne benefite" (l. 834). Elsewhere, the Duke of Guise claims to have received a papal dispensation in advance for any sins which he may in future commit in carrying on his anti-Protestant campaign (ll. 119-120). Thus, throughout the play Marlowe advances the proposition that the slaughter of the French Protestants was carried on to accommodate the wishes of the Pope.

The Duke of Guise, it should be noticed, is considered untrustworthy even by the members of his own party because he places his loyalty to the Pope above his allegiance to his own country. Moreover, the international nature of the Catholic Church allows the Guise to commit himself, when it is to his advantage, to other nations than his own, as well as to the Pope. In a soliloquy, the Guise admits that he had allied himself with powers outside France. He speaks of his own ambition to become king of France and of the seditious means by which he intends to reach this goal, and says:

. . . from Spaine the stately Catholickes  
Sends Indian golde to coyne me French ecues:  
For this haue I a largesse from the Pope,  
A pension and a dispensation too . . . .

(ll. 117-120)

The reference to Spain here is evidently to the Catholic League which allied France and Spain. The papal

dispensation refers to the Catholic practice of granting personal forgiveness for sins. Later in the play, Guise refers again to his alliance with Rome and Spain, expressing what he feels is his own importance to those who wield the power in the Catholic world:

. . . the Pope will sell his triple crowne,  
I, and the catholick Philip King of Spaine,  
Ere I shall want, will cause his Indians  
To rip the golden bowels of America.

(ll. 858-861)

Later, when the King advances reasons to justify the murder of the Guise, he points to the Duke's multiple loyalties and treasonable attitude toward France:

Did he not cause the King of Spaines huge fleete  
To threaten England and to menace me?  
. . . . .  
Hath he not made me in the Popes defence,  
To spend the treasure that should strength my land  
In ciuill broiles between Nauarre and me?  
Tush, to be short, he meant to make me Munke,  
Or else to murder me, and so be King.

(ll. 1045-1052)

Navarre, using some of the same arguments the King has just used, explains the Protestant case against the Duke of Guise in terms that must easily have aroused sympathy in Marlowe's audience. He tells his followers:

We vndertake to mannage these our warres  
Against the proud disturbers of the faith,  
I mean the Guise, the Pope, and King of Spaine,  
Who set themselues to tread vs vnder foot,  
And rent our true religion from this land;  
But for you know our quarrell is no more,  
But to defend their strange inuentions,  
Which they will put to vs with sword and fire:

We must with resolute mindes resolve to fight,  
 In honor of our God and countries good.  
 Spaine is the counsell chamber of the pope,  
 Spaine is the place where he makes peace and warre,  
 And Guise for Spaine hath now incenst the King,  
 To send his power to meet vs in the field.

(11. 705-718)

In his speech Navarre expresses the same fears that troubled many Englishmen of Marlowe's time, especially the fear of foreign domination at the hands of Spain, here shown as a confederate of Rome, and fear of the imposition of Rome's "strange inuentions," that is, the rituals of the Roman Church, regarded as the inventions of the popes rather than the teachings of Christ.

Navarre expresses much the same apprehension later in the play when he says that he is afraid that the Guise will be

The ruine of that famous Realme, of France:  
 For his aspiring thoughts aime at the crowne,  
 And takes his vantage on Religion,  
 To plant the Pope and popelings in the Realme,  
 And binde it wholly to the Sea of Rome . . . .

(11. 929-933)

As we have seen, the English under Elizabeth I lived in fear and suspicion of the Catholic colleges and seminaries on the continent. These institutions, it was believed, were breeding grounds for spies and revolutionaries. Significantly, the Duke of Guise says that he expects to draw support from these Catholic establishments:

Paris hath full fiue hundred Colledges,  
 As Monasteries, Priories, Abbyes and halles,  
 Wherein are thirty thousand able men,  
 Besides a thousand sturdy student Catholicks,  
 And more, of my knowledge in one cloyster keeps  
 Fiue hundred fatte Franciscan Fryers and priestes --  
 All this and more, if more may be comprisde,  
 To bring the will of our desires to end.

(ll. 137-144)

Henry III uses the Guise's involvement with the schools at Douai and Rheims partially to justify the killing of the Duke:

Did he not draw a sorte of English priestes  
 From Doway to the Seminary at Remes,  
 To hatch forth treason gainst their naturall Queene?

(ll. 1042-1044)

But, even though Marlowe's anti-Catholic hero is defeated by the forces of the Pope, Protestantism emerges triumphant in The Massacre at Paris. Near the end, Queen Catherine laments the imminent defeat of the Catholic forces:

The Protestants will glory and insulte,  
 Wicked Nauarre will get the crowne of France,  
 The popedome cannot stand, all goes to wrack,  
 And all for thee my Guise . . . .

(ll. 1097-1100)

In spite of the Queen's evident unhappiness at this turn of events, we can imagine that the audience in the theatre rejoiced at the prospect.

Other Catholic reversals at the end of The Massacre at Paris must have been received similarly. For example,

when we are shown the murder of the Cardinal of Lorraine, he protests that he should not be killed, being a cardinal (l. 1103), but one of his killers answers, "Wert thou the Pope thou mightst not scape from vs" (l. 1104). This line must surely have sent a partisan thrill through Marlowe's audience. A similar effect must have been produced when the dying Henry III told Epernouve to move against the pope, urging him to "whet thy sword on Sextus bones,/ That it may keenly slice the Catholicks" (ll. 1250-1251). A few lines later, after the death of Henry and the elevation of Navarre to the throne, the new king vows that "Rome and all those popish Prelates there/ Shall curse the time that ere Nauarre was King. . . ." (ll. 1260-1261). These lines, too, must have stirred the emotions of Marlowe's original audience.

One emotional speech in The Massacre at Paris will serve to summarize Marlowe's exploitation of this time's conventional attitude toward the Church of Rome. Henry III addresses the ambassador of Queen Elizabeth of England thus:

Agent for England, send thy mistres word,  
 What this detested Iacobin hath done.  
 Tell her for all this that I hope to liue;  
 Which if I doe, the Papall Monarck goes  
 To wrack and antechristian kingdome falles.  
 These bloudy hands shall teare his triple Crowne,  
 And fire accursed Rome about his eares.  
 Ile fire his crased buildings, and inforse  
 The papall towers to kisse the holy earth.

Nauarre, giue me thy hand, I heere do sweare  
 To ruinate that wicked Church of Rome,  
 That hatcheth vp such bloody practises,  
 And heere protest eternall loue to thee,  
 And to the Queene of England specially,  
 Whom God hath blest for hating Papestry.

(11. 1207-1221)

In this speech, Marlowe makes a blatant appeal to the patriotic and religious emotions of his audience, showing a French Catholic king, dying from a wound dealt him by a treacherous priest, admitting the truth of the English Protestant mission to resist and overthrow the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, The Massacre at Paris is a moving statement of the Protestant myth deeply imbedded in the Elizabethan consciousness.

Closely related to The Massacre at Paris, because of its use of historical rather than legendary materials, is The Troublesome Raigne and Lamentable Death of Edward the Second, King of England. Marlowe's only play with an English setting and an English hero, Edward the Second is characterized, although to a far lesser degree, by the anti-Catholicism of The Massacre at Paris. Here, King Edward II expresses the same sentiments as Henry III had done. In Edward the Second, when the Archbishop of Canterbury threatens to relieve the barons of their oaths of allegiance to the King if Edward does not banish Gaveston, Edward speaks these lines in soliloquy:

Why should a king be subject to a priest?  
 Proud Rome, that hatchest such imperiall groomes,  
 For these thy superstitious taperlights,  
 Wherewith thy antichristian churches blaze.  
 Ile fire thy crazed buildings, and enforce  
 The papall towers to kiss the lowlie ground,  
 With slaughtered priests, make Tibers channell swell,  
 And bankes raisd higher with their sepulchers:  
 As for the peeres that back the cleargie thus,  
 If I be king, not one of them shall liue.

(11. 392-401)

As Paul Kocher has pointed out, "Threats by the Cardinal to excommunicate Edward and release his subjects from their allegiance were introduced by Marlowe, without warrant from Holinshed's Chronicles, as a parallel to the Pope's bulls against Queen Elizabeth similarly encouraging rebellion."<sup>10</sup> The fact that this situation, with its symbolic contemporary reference, is Marlowe's own invention indicates that Marlowe wished particularly to introduce the anti-Catholic theme to this play and went out of his way to do so, using versions of two of the most colorful lines from Henry's speech in The Massacre at Paris. Certainly we may suppose that Edward's lines, like those already quoted from The Massacre at Paris, must have provoked a stirring response from the Elizabethan audience. As Kocher says, "the appeal" of this speech in Edward the Second "is to English hatred of Catholicism and specifically of the papacy."<sup>11</sup> Frederic Boas agrees that the similar

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<sup>10</sup> Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, pp. 133-134.

<sup>11</sup> Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 134.

speeches in The Massacre at Paris and Edward the Second make "capital out of the passionate Protestant feeling in the theatre audience."<sup>12</sup>

Marlowe's audience, as Kocher points out, would have recognized the parallel in Edward the Second to Queen Elizabeth's excommunication and the Pope's encouragement of rebellion against her.<sup>13</sup> They might also have seen a parallel in the humiliation and imprisonment which Edward imposes on the Bishop of Coventry (11. 193-207) to the treatment accorded the clergy by King John and King Henry VIII. Tudor dramatic presentations of the life of King John, as we have seen, show that the Elizabethans regarded him as a forerunner of the English Reformation and precursor of Henry VIII. Both Kings had had disputes with Rome over political power in England; both had been excommunicated; both had seized Church property in England. Edward II, like King John, had grave difficulties with rebellious barons who were supported by the bishops. Marlowe may have consciously attempted to strengthen this admittedly weak parallel with King John -- and by extension with Henry VIII -- by making Edward's story adhere more closely to the popular legend of King John, depicting Edward as yet another forerunner of the English Reformation.' Although, as David

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<sup>12</sup>Boas, Christopher Marlowe, p. 180.

<sup>13</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, pp. 133-134.

Bevington has written of Edward the Second, "it is confusing to find the king's worst tyrannies justified in the name of royal independence from the papacy,"<sup>14</sup> such justification may indeed have been Marlowe's intention in this play. It is relevant that, as Helen C. White has shown, Foxe had found justification for King John's oppressive response to the treasonous behavior of the bishops and barons in an analogous situation.<sup>15</sup> The Church's intervention on behalf of the barons in Edward the Second must have seemed to an Elizabethan audience an unjustifiable foreign interference which in fact widened the gap between the King and the nobles and weakened both the royal power and the nation itself.

It may, however, be of some significance that the anti-Catholic element in Edward the Second is to be found almost entirely within the first six or seven hundred lines of the play, that is, within that portion which is usually marked off in modern editions as the first act of the play. It is here that Marlowe placed Edward's impassioned anti-papal speech (ll. 392-401); it is also within the narrow confines of this portion of the play that we find repeated references to the power of the papacy over the English crown. For instance, when Edward tells Gaveston to attack

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<sup>14</sup>Bevington, Tudor Drama and Politics, p. 217.

<sup>15</sup>Cited by Helen C. White, Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs, p. 175.

the Bishop of Coventry and to "Throwe of his golden miter,  
 rend his stole,/ And in the channell christen him anew"  
 (ll. 187-188), Kent warns the king that the bishop will  
 "complaine vnto the sea of Rome" (l. 190), to which Gaveston  
 replies, "Let him complaine vnto the sea of hell" (l. 191).  
 The king now has the bishop's goods siezed, his properties  
 given to Gaveston and the bishop himself sent to the Tower.  
 Kent's fear that such an attack on a bishop will bring the  
 wrath of Rome upon the king turns out to be well-founded.  
 The English nobility begin to line up on the side of the  
 Church against the king; the Archbishop of Canterbury says  
 that "God himselve is vp in armes,/ When violence is offered  
 to the church" (ll. 247-248), and sends a messenger to the  
 pope complaining of the king's treatment of the Bishop of  
 Coventry. The Archbishop and the barons decide to act to-  
 gether to banish Gaveston and, should the king override  
 their action, according to the younger Mortimer, "Then may  
 we lawfully reuolt from him" (l. 280). When they confront  
 the king with their desire to banish his minion, the Arch-  
 bishop says:

You know that I am legate to the Pope,  
 On your allegeance to the sea of Rome,  
 Subscribe as we haue done to his exile.

(ll. 346-348)

To this statement, the younger Mortimer adds that if the  
 king refuses, "then may we/ Depose him and elect an other

king" (ll. 349-350).

Thus, in the first act of Edward the Second, although Edward can clearly be seen to be less than an ideal king, Marlowe shows him to be opposed principally by the Roman Catholic Church and by noblemen who seem hypocritically to be using the excuse of the Church's opposition to force the king into a situation where he must comply with their wishes or be deposed. By appealing in the first few scenes of the play to the Elizabethan idea of the independence of the monarchy from the secular power of the Church of Rome and of the political power of the nobility, Marlowe creates a situation in which the audience is almost compelled to feel sympathy toward a man who is, although weak and perhaps vicious, a legitimate monarch.

One important reason for Marlowe's seeking by any possible means to rally the audience to Edward's cause was the fact that in Edward II Marlowe had a truly unsympathetic hero. Weak, emotional, homosexual, tending always to place his own desires ahead of the needs of the state, the historical Edward did not evidently project any of the qualities that the Elizabethans sought in their ideal of kingship. In his account of Edward's reign in Actes and Monuments, Foxe found little good to say of this king, other than Edward's occasional outbursts against the Church of Rome, and even these do not seem sufficient to justify

Edward's other actions in Foxe's view.<sup>16</sup> Still, as a legitimate king, Edward, in speaking out in Marlowe's play against the Roman Church and in a fashion that the Elizabethan audience had been accustomed to associate with heroism, must have appeared to possess at least a touch of greatness beneath his personal weaknesses, and the fact of his speaking at least once as Marlowe's audience must have expected a monarch to speak may have invested this unfortunate figure with the air of tragedy which his creator evidently desired to bestow upon him.

Although I have found nothing specifically anti-Catholic in the first part of Tamburlaine, it is interesting that, in the opinion of William J. Brown, one of the principal sources for Marlowe's depiction of Bajazet and the treatment Tamburlaine accords him is Foxe's Actes and Monuments.<sup>17</sup> Foxe, says Brown, justifies Tamburlaine's harsh treatment of Bajazet on the ground that the latter was a "cruel tyrant and a persecutor of Christians."<sup>18</sup> Brown also points out that in the opinion of M. C. Bradbrook, the image of Tamburlaine using Bajazet as a

<sup>16</sup>Foxe, Actes and Monuments, II, pp. 641-666.

<sup>17</sup>William J. Brown, "Marlowe's Debasement of Bajazet: Foxe's Actes and Monuments and Tamburlaine, Part I," Renaissance Quarterly XXIV (1971), pp. 38-48.

<sup>18</sup>Brown, "Marlowe's Debasement of Bajazet: Foxe's Actes and Monuments and Tamburlaine, Part I," p. 41.

footstool may have derived from an illustration in Actes and Monuments which showed Henry VIII using the pope in this manner.<sup>19</sup>

In the second part of Tamburlaine, however, there is a clearly anti-Catholic presentation of a well-known Catholic monarch. I refer to the Emperor Sigismund's breaking the oath he had given to the Turk Orcanes. According to Paul Kocher this episode "is an outcome of Marlowe's anti-Christian prejudices, only transparently disguised. With slight suggestion from the Tamburlaine sources, the poet reaches out into an entirely distinct period of Hungarian history for a narrative of Christian bad faith which has no integral position in the plot of his drama."<sup>20</sup>

The historical episode that Marlowe inserts into Tamburlaine is summarized by John Bakeless: "The historical facts that Marlowe describes are those of the battle of Varna in 1444, long after Tamburlaine was dead. King Ladislaus of Hungary (not Sigismund) had made a ten-year truce with the Turkish emperor, Amurath II, in the treaty of Szedin (1443); but he was later persuaded by the papal legate, Cardinal Julian, to break the truce

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<sup>19</sup>Brown, "Marlowe's Debasement of Bajazet: Foxe's Actes and Monuments and Tamburlaine, Part I," p. 45. Brown is here referring to M. C. Bradbrook, "The Inheritance of Christopher Marlowe," Theology, LXVII (1964), p. 302.

<sup>20</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 95.

and attack the unsuspecting Turks. Amurath, however, rallied his troops, crossed the Bosphorus, met the Christians at Varna, and conquered them, killing both Ladislaus and the Cardinal."<sup>21</sup>

In the second part of Tamburlaine, it is Sigismund, a contemporary of Tamburlaine,<sup>22</sup> who makes a truce with Orcanes, and is then persuaded by two of his followers to break his oath by a surprise attack on the Turks. The justification given by Baldwin for breaking the oath is this:

. . . with such Infidels,  
In whom no faith nor true religion rests,  
We are not bound to those accomplishments,  
The holy lawes of Christendome inioine:  
But as the faith which they prophanely plight  
Is not by necessary pollycy,  
To be esteem'd assurance for our selues,  
So what we vow to them should not infringe  
Our liberty of armes and victory.

(11. 2827-2835)

These lines and this reasoning recall the dictum of Barabas in The Jew of Malta that,

It's no sinne to deceiue a Christian;  
For they themselues hold it a principle,  
Faith is not to be held with Heretickes . . . .

(11. 1074-1076)

Paul Kocher's explanation of Barabas' remark is this: "Its major premise is the notorious Catholic doctrine

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<sup>21</sup> Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, p. 233.

<sup>22</sup> Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, p. 233.

that promises made to heretics need not be kept. This is imputed to the French Catholic League by the Huguenots . . . . And Philip of Spain was charged with reliance upon it in treacherously attacking England . . . ." <sup>23</sup>

The French Catholic League was, of course, the anti-Protestant party of the Duke of Guise and his followers.

Kocher cites two Elizabethan works which advanced this view of the supposed Catholic attitude toward keeping faith with non-believers. The first is The Contre-Guyse (London, 1589) from which Kocher quotes these lines:

"The counsell of Constance (say they) commandeth us to keepe no faith with the enemies of the faith: by which decree, John Hus and Hierome of Prague were condemned to death, and the Cardinal S. Julian was sent as legate into Hungarie, to break the treatie of peace made with the Turkes . . . as if God had not shewed the error of that decree, by the tragical effects ensuing . . . ." <sup>24</sup>

Kocher also quotes M. Sutcliffe who, speaking of Philip II of Spain, in The Practice, Proceedings and Lawe of Armes (London, 1593), cites the Council of Constance as the Catholic authority for not keeping faith with heretics; according to Sutcliffe, it is "no marvell, if they observe no solemnities in warres against us, whom

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<sup>23</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 123.

<sup>24</sup>Quoted by Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 123.

they hold for heretikes, hauing already determined, that faith and promise is not to be performed unto heretikes (Council. constant.)."<sup>25</sup> Sutcliffe's parenthetical comment refers the reader to the Council of Constance as the source of this "doctrine."

In the quotation from The Contre-Guyse we may observe an interesting conjunction of historical facts; for the author speaks of two distinct events, the Council of Constance (1414) and the event on which Marlowe bases Sigismund's action in Tamburlaine, part two, Cardinal Julian's urging King Ladislaus to break his truce with the Turks. What makes this juxtaposition of events most interesting is the fact that it was the Hungarian Emperor Sigismund, who had convened the Council of Constance. This Council had been called for the purpose of discussing the alleged heresies of the reformer John Hus, of whom, according to Foxe's Actes and Monuments, the Emperor Sigismund had said there was "never a worse or more pernicious heretic than he."<sup>26</sup> Sigismund pledged safe conduct for Hus and his followers to and from the Council. However, confronted with Hus, Sigismund lost his temper and revoked his promise; as a result, Hus and Jerome of Prague were

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<sup>25</sup>Quoted by Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 123.

<sup>26</sup>Foxe, Actes and Monuments, III, p. 468.

condemned as heretics and executed.<sup>27</sup> Despite Sigismund's view of him, Hus was regarded by sixteenth century Protestants as a great modern saint, one of the first Protestant martyrs. Indeed, Foxe considered Hus one of the founders of Protestantism,<sup>28</sup> and, as such, Hus is one of the few non-English names in Foxe's Calendar of saints and martyrs.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, the Council of Constance and the Emperor Sigismund were notorious in the eyes of the Elizabethans.

Sigismund was perhaps best known to the English of Marlowe's time through Foxe's Actes and Monuments, although Foxe himself refers the reader to a work of Luther's, De Christiana Libertate, which, he says, describes "what damage and inconvenience have grown by the council of Constance; and what misfortune Sigismund the emperor sustained for not keeping faith and promise with John Huss and Jerome."<sup>30</sup>

In Foxe's own accounts of Sigismund, the emphasis is placed upon the punishment that was visited upon Sigismund because he had broken his word. According to Foxe:

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<sup>27</sup>Matthew Spinka, John Hus, A Biography (Princeton, 1968), pp. 219-290, gives a detailed account of Hus' conflict with the Council of Constance.

<sup>28</sup>Haller, Foxe's Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation, p. 165.

<sup>29</sup>White, Tudor Books of Saints and Martyrs, p. 137.

<sup>30</sup>Foxe, Actes and Monuments, IV, p. 280.

Sigismund . . . was a great doer in the council of Constance against John Huss and Jerome of Prague. This emperor had ever ill luck, fighting against the Turks. Twice he warred against them, and in both the battles was discomfited and put to flight; once about the city of Nicopolis and Moesia, fighting against Bajazet, the great Turk, A.D. 1395, the second time fighting against Celebine, the son of Bajazet, about the town called Colombacium. But especially after the council of Constance, wherein were condemned and burned those two godly martyrs, more unprosperous success did then follow him, fighting against the Bohemians, his own subjects, A.D. 1420, by whom he was repulsed in so many battles, to his great dishonour . . . : who was so beaten, both of the Turks, and at home of his own people, that he never did encounter with the Turks after.

Elsewhere in Actes and Monuments, speaking of the punishments that God has allowed to fall upon those who have persecuted the true Christians, Foxe describes other aspects of Sigismund's misfortunes:

Amongst others, here is not to be past over nor forgotten, the notable example of God's just scourge upon Sigismund the emperor, of whom mention is made before, in the condemnation of John Huss, and Jerome of Prague. After the death and wrongful condemnation of which blessed martyrs, nothing afterward went prosperously with the said emperor, but all contrary; so that he both died without issue, and in his wars he ever went to the worst. And not long after, Ladislaus, his daughter's son, king of Hungary, fighting against the Turk, was slain in the field. So that in the time of one generation all the posterity and

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<sup>31</sup>Foxe, Actes and Monuments, III, p. 761.

offspring of this emperor perished. Besides this, Barbara his wife came to such ruin by her wicked lewdness, that she became a shame and slander to the name and state of all queens, whereby all Christian princes and emperors may sufficiently be admonished if they have grace, what it is to defile themselves with the blood of Christ's blessed saints and martyrs.<sup>32</sup>

These facts in the life of the Emperor Sigismund, as they were known to the Elizabethans, suggest an explanation for Marlowe's own telescoping of historical events in the second part of Tamburlaine, namely that he wished to show the punishment of the Catholic emperor for breaking a sacred oath. The particular episode that he chose, involving Ladislaus and Cardinal Julian, gave him the basic material that he needed, but he must have wished to make it quite clear that this was a Catholic monarch. Therefore, he chose the historic figure of Sigismund who was well known as a Catholic monarch who had broken his word on at least one famous occasion; as a notorious persecutor of Protestants; and as one who had propagated the notion that Catholics were not bound to honor promises given to heretics. Thus, the choice of Sigismund as a character in this play may be explained as an ingenious piece of Elizabethan anti-Catholic propaganda.

More difficult to explain, however, is the dramatic function of the episode within the larger fabric of the

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<sup>32</sup>Foxe, Actes and Monuments, VIII, pp. 662-663.

play. Aside from the possibility that Marlowe for one reason or another simply wished to play upon the anti-Catholic prejudices of his audience by presenting a Catholic villain, or that he merely wished to inject a note of propaganda into his play, as he would do at greater length in The Massacre at Paris, there seems little justification for the entire episode. There remains the one other possibility that just as he evidently used an anti-papal speech to create sympathy for Edward II, Marlowe wished to direct the audience's sympathy toward Orcanes, who has a speech denouncing the falseness of Christians, which in the context of the play would have meant Catholics. But even this explanation brings us back to the idea that the value of this episode is purely one of propaganda. Whatever justification we may find for the Sigismund subplot in Tamburlaine, part two, the episode's value as anti-Catholic propaganda must be taken into consideration.

What is certain, though, is that in both parts of Tamburlaine Marlowe presents the defeat of a historical character who had been denounced in Foxe's Actes and Monuments as a persecutor of Christians; in each case, it is possible to see the persecutor's defeat as the just punishment for their previous deeds. This, in fact, may be one of the elements that tie the two parts of the play together, providing a structural unity, however loose.

The anti-Catholicism of Doctor Faustus is closer to that of Elizabethan comedy than to the all-out attacks on the Catholic Church that we have seen so far in Marlowe's other plays. For instance, at the first appearance of Mephistophilis, who has entered in the form of a conventional devil, Faustus tells him, "Goe and returne an old Franciscan Frier,/ That holy shape becomes a diuell best" (ll. 269-270). Moreover, as in many of the plays that we have already examined, in Doctor Faustus, Roman Catholic clergymen are depicted largely in comic scenes designed to show them not only as vicious but as foolish in the impotent superstition that Marlowe assigns to them; they are far less sinister than the Catholics had been in either The Massacre at Paris or Edward II, perhaps because they do not enact a major role in the play and are cast only as incidental comic figures. The treatment of the Catholic clergy here is suggestive of the fabliau tradition or even of Chaucer, although there is no basis for a comparison between Chaucer and Marlowe on this score; Chaucer's bad clerics were presented as examples of the results of excessive license and were counter-balanced by Chaucer's portrait of the idealized poor parson. Marlowe, on the other hand, presents no ideal of clerical behavior, merely the sensualists who had become stock characters in Elizabethan polemical drama. The clergy in Doctor Faustus

are closely akin to those shown in the comic scenes of The Troublesome Reign of King John, pasteboard figures representing conventional Roman Catholicism. It is perhaps significant that the Old Man who appears to try and save Faustus from damnation is not depicted as being a member of any of the clerical orders; he represents wisdom or truth, perhaps, but not the Church.

It has frequently been said that Doctor Faustus is a surprising play to have come from the pen of an "atheist." Douglas Bush says that "Doctor Faustus, if we knew nothing of its author, might stand as the most positively Christian of Elizabethan tragedies."<sup>33</sup> Frederick Boas says that "the 'atheist' Marlowe's presentation of hell is far more spiritual than that of the Puritan Milton in the next century."<sup>34</sup> Paul Kocher finds that Doctor Faustus contains a "magnificent dramatization of Christian ideas," and says that the Christian "system," however much Marlowe might have rejected it intellectually, "still had a powerful hold of some sort on his imagination and emotions."<sup>35</sup>

However, it is not necessary to reconcile the essential Christianity of Doctor Faustus with the alleged atheism of its author if we accept the distinction that was

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<sup>33</sup>Douglas Bush, Prefaces to Renaissance Literature (New York, 1965), p. 45.

<sup>34</sup>Boas, Christopher Marlowe, p. 210.

<sup>35</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, pp. 118-119.

current in Marlowe's England between true Christianity, or Protestantism, and the heretical institution, the Church of Rome. In Doctor Faustus, as in Marlowe's other plays, mockery of religious institutions is always directed against the Roman Catholic Church and its adherents, and usually against easily recognizable Roman Catholics. Here Marlowe's anti-papal raillery principally takes the form of one splendid scene of physical comedy, the butt of which is the Catholic hierarchy, including the Pope. Yet there are also several scenes in Doctor Faustus where Marlowe's anti-Catholicism brings forth bitter jibes reflecting the political situation of Marlowe's time.<sup>36</sup>

In the version published in 1604 of the scene depicting the visit of Faustus and Mephistophilis to the Pope's "priuy chamber" in Rome, Marlowe treated his audience to an orgy of anti-Catholic farce. Mephistophilis promises first that we shall see "a troupe of bald-pate Friers,/ Whose summum bonum is in belly-cheare" (ll. 854-855). The scene that follows shows Faustus, invisible to the clergymen, snatching plates out of the Pope's hands; these, it is worth mentioning, are evidently rich gifts which the Pope has

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<sup>36</sup>W. W. Greg, ed., Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, 1604-1616: Parallel Texts (Oxford, 1950), prints both versions of Doctor Faustus en face and gives his reasons for believing that the later printing of Doctor Faustus represents the play as Marlowe wrote it and that the earlier printing is a defective memorial reconstruction or an abridgement of Marlowe's original. See especially pp. 33-34; pp. 63-97.

received from some of his cardinals, evidence to an Elizabethan audience of the wealth and privilege that went with the Pope's high office. A cardinal who is present suggests to the Pope, with what the audience must have taken to be typical Roman Catholic superstition, that the plates are being snatched away by "some ghost newly crept out of Purgatory come to begge a pardon of your holinesse" (ll. 876-877). Accepting this possibility, the Pope commands his "friars" to "prepare a dirge to lay the fury of this ghost . . ." (ll. 878-879). We may note in passing that John Bale had condemned dirges as Roman Catholic inventions in his Three Laws of Nature, Moses and Christ.<sup>37</sup>

After this, evidently to protect himself from the "ghost," the Pope three times makes the sign of the cross, another "superstitious" Catholic practice. For doing so, Faustus "hits him a boxe of the eare," which makes the Pope, the cardinal and the friars run away (s.d. 883). Mephistophilis, who has not previously taken any active part in the assault on the Pope, says that now he and Faustus will be "curst with bell, booke, and candle" (ll. 885-886). Faustus mocks this possibility, saying "Anon you shal heare a hogge grunt, a calfe bleat, and an asse braye, because it is S. Peters holy day" (ll. 889-890). At this point, the friars return to sing their dirge which evidently

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<sup>37</sup>Bale, Three Laws, Sig. B vii<sup>r</sup>.



parodies the Elizabethan conception of Roman Catholic liturgy, including a Latin response to each verse: "Cursed be hee that stole away his holinesse meate from the table. --Maledicat dominus" (ll. 893-894). During the singing of this dirge, Mephistophilis and Faustus "beate the Friers, and fling fier-workes among them . . ." (s.d. 904),

It is important to emphasize the fact that this, one of the most amusing and theatrically effective anti-Catholic scenes in the drama of the 1590's, is a set piece and almost totally irrelevant to the progress of the play. Although, as Frederick Boas has shown, the scene is taken fairly faithfully from Marlowe's principal source, the English Faust Book, as Boas calls it,<sup>38</sup> this episode was amplified from the original source because of the opportunity it afforded for a number of hearty laughs at the expense of the Roman Catholic Church. Upon examination, we see that the scene provides not only mockery of the Pope, who as we have seen is depicted as superstitious, but also at Catholic practices such as dirges, the sign of the cross, Latin prayer and papal pardons. Considering how brief the scene is, a remarkable amount of anti-Catholic material may be perceived in it, much of which we have already seen to have been established as the target for theatrical derision in the plays of Bale and his followers.

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<sup>38</sup>Frederick S. Boad, ed. Tragical History of Doctor Faustus. The Works and Life of Christopher Marlowe, R. H. Case, General Editor. (New York, 1966), pp. 183-184.

It is worth commenting on the fact that the Pope is shown displaying his rich dishes to the Cardinal of Lorraine, even though in the English Faust Book the cardinal present at this event is "the Cardinall of Pauia."<sup>39</sup> In The Massacre at Paris, the Cardinal of Lorraine was the brother of the Duke of Guise and was instrumental in engineering the persecution of the Huguenots. We cannot say with certitude that we are seeing the same man at another stage of his career, but it is likely that Marlowe's audience would have associated the figure who appeared in Doctor Faustus, meeting privately with the Pope, with one of the authors of the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre, and would have been delighted to see him comically mistreated as he was in this play.<sup>40</sup>

In the second edition of Doctor Faustus, printed in 1616, the visit of Faustus and Mephistophilis to Rome is even more elaborate and more extensive in its anti-Catholicism than was the 1604 version of the same material. In the 1616 Faustus Mephistophilis takes a greater part in the attacks on the pope and has a number of anti-Catholic lines of dialogue. For example, on their arrival in Rome Mephistophilis encourages Faustus to

. . . devise what best contents thy minde,  
By cunning in thine Art to crosse the Pope,

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<sup>39</sup>Boas, Doctor Faustus, p. 183.

<sup>40</sup>Boas points out that the title of Cardinal of Lorraine had in fact been held by three members of the House of Guise in the sixteenth century. Doctor Faustus, p. 114n.

Or dash the pride of this solemnity;  
 To make the Monkes and Abbots stand like Apes,  
 And point like Antiques at his triple Crowne:  
 To beate the beades about the Friers Pates,  
 Or clap huge hornes, vpon the Cardinals heads:  
 Or any villany thou canst deuise,  
 And I'll performe it Faustus . . . .

(11. 879-887)

When the Pope enters, following a procession of cardinals and bishops, he deals with the problem of Saxon Bruno, who has evidently challenged the Pope's right of office. Like Tamburlaine, the Pope uses his enemy, in this case Saxon Bruno, as a footstool. When Bruno claims that he has been elected to be pope by the Emperor, the Pope says:

We will depose the Emperour for that deed,  
 And curse the people that submit to him;  
 Both he and thou shalt stand excommunicate,  
 And interdict from Churches priuiledge,  
 In all society of holy men . . . .

(11. 928-932)

The Pope goes on to say of the Emperor that "we"

. . . will . . . quell that haughty Schismatique;  
 And by authority Apostolicall  
 Depose him from his Regall Gouvernement.

(11. 944-946)

Leslie M. Oliver has shown that the source of this episode in Doctor Faustus is Actes and Monuments, where Foxe tells of a schism that arose during the reign of Pope Alexander III, when the Emperor Frederick elected his own pope, Victor IV. According to Foxe, Pope Alexander III, when he had successfully suppressed this schism, used the

Emperor as his footstool to signify the victory of the Pope's authority over that of a secular ruler.<sup>41</sup> As this historical episode is used in Doctor Faustus, it seems likely that the Pope's exercise of secular power is meant to parallel the papal excommunication of Queen Elizabeth with its implicit aim of deposing her from the British throne by relieving her subjects of their allegiance to her. The relationship between the events of the play and the Queen's excommunication may be heightened by the fact that the Pope refers to the Council of Trent (l. 906), which had met from 1545 to 1563 and of which we shall have more to say with relation to The Jew of Malta.

When the Pope sends the "Cardinals of France and Padua" into the Consistory to consult the "Statutes Decretall" issued by the Council of Trent (ll. 903-909),<sup>42</sup> Faustus tells Mephistophilis to "Strike" the Cardinals "with sloth, and drowsy idleness" while they are reading "their superstitious Bookes" (ll. 915-916), so that he and Faustus may take their robes. This done, Faustus and Mephistophilis, appearing to the Pope in the guises of the

<sup>41</sup> Leslie M. Oliver, "Rowley, Foxe and the Faustus Editions," Modern Language Notes, LX (June, 1945), pp. 391-394. The relevant passage in the service is Foxe, Actes and Monuments, II, pp. 195-196. Oliver quotes Foxe to show that, to gain sufficient power to force the Emperor to submit, the Pope kidnapped and imprisoned the Emperor's son.

<sup>42</sup> Bale had condemned both Catholic councils and decretals in The Three Laws, Sig. B vii<sup>r</sup>.

Cardinals of France and Padua, tell him that according to the statutes of the Council of Trent he must condemn Saxon Bruno and the Emperor as "Lollards and bold Schismatiques, / And proud disturbers of the Churches peace" (ll. 977-978), and that Bruno should be burned at the stake. The Pope seems happy to comply with these statutes and gives Bruno, along with his valuable triple crown, into the care of the false cardinals. When the actual cardinals awaken and reappear, there is much confusion as to what has happened, especially as to the whereabouts of Bruno, whom by now Mephistophilis has safely spirited away from Rome, and of his "rich triple crowne" (l. 1049) which has also vanished. The Pope now has the real cardinals sent off to prison to be tortured for having evidently let a prisoner escape and for having apparently misappropriated a valuable possession of the Pope. This episode is followed by an altered version of the scene in the 1604 edition of Doctor Faustus, in which Faustus snatches the plates away from the Pope. One of the differences worth recording between the two versions of this scene is that the Cardinal of Lorraine, who is not mentioned by name in the 1616 printing, is replaced in this scene by the King of Hungary.

The additional anti-papal material in the 1616 Doctor Faustus seems more consciously topical than that in the 1604 edition. In the later version there is a greater

emphasis upon the Pope's temporal power, especially his authority over a secular monarch and his ability to turn Catholic subjects against their rulers by means of ex-communication. There is also a strong suggestion that the papacy is guilty of religious persecution, particularly in the reference to the Lollards, who were often thought of as forerunners of English Protestantism.

Another anti-Catholic reference in Doctor Faustus is Faustus' early resolve to use his newly acquired magical power to "chase the Prince of Parma from our land" (l. 121). The Prince of Parma, whom we will discuss in greater detail in connection with The Jew of Malta, was a great military leader, having commanded the Spanish troops at Zutphen, in the battle in which Sir Philip Sidney received his fatal wound, and was, according to Frederick Boas, the Spanish Governor-General of the Netherlands from 1579 to 1592.<sup>43</sup> It is likely that the original audience of Doctor Faustus would have seen a parallel between Faustus' plan to drive the Prince of Parma from his land and the actual driving of the Pope from his own private quarters; in each instance, Faustus was using physical force and magic to abuse a prominent Catholic enemy of England.

Yet another topical reference can be found in Doctor Faustus, again referring to the depriving of a famous Catholic of something which he then possessed. This

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<sup>43</sup>Boas, Doctor Faustus, p. 62n.

reference is in Valdes' words to Faustus when speaking of the power that magic can bring them; he says that it can bring them "from America the golden fleece,/ That yearly stuffes olde Philips treasury" (ll. 160-161). This is, of course, a reference to the riches that Spain was bringing out of the new world, and by implication the remark is designed not only to suggest the avarice of the Catholic king of Spain, but to make Marlowe's audience laugh at the thought of depriving him of his wealth.

In The Jew of Malta, the anti-Catholic theme is more important to the over-all significance of the play than in any other of Marlowe's plays except The Massacre at Paris, with which The Jew of Malta has certain affinities. The reference to the Guise in the prologue to The Jew of Malta (l. 3) makes the modern reader recall the events of the other play. To Marlowe's contemporary audience, the reference would call to mind the monstrous figure of popular English history, the evil genius Marlowe represented in The Massacre at Paris. It seems probable, in view of some other contemporary references in The Jew of Malta, that mention of the Duke of Guise in the prologue is deliberately placed in the opening lines of the play in order to arouse the audience's violent hatred of Roman Catholics. Further anti-Papist feeling is aroused only a few lines later, when "Machevill" rails against the hypocrisy

of the Roman Catholic hierarchy:

Though some speak openly against my bookes,  
 Yet will they reade me, and thereby attaine  
 To Peters Chayre: And when they cast me off,  
 Are poyson'd by my oliming followers.

(11. 10-13)

Thus, although the figure of Machiavelli appears here to introduce the Jew Barabas to the audience, this archetypal villain identifies himself first with the Guise and the papacy, both enemies of the English crown.

It is not often noted that this play takes place in a setting that is specifically Roman Catholic in its religious outlook. Paul Kocher mentions the fact, only to assert that it is not important.<sup>44</sup> But the Roman Catholic setting is plain from several pieces of internal evidence which tend to demonstrate that the play is set in a very different place from Elizabethan England. The most specific indications of the Catholicism of the setting are the religious practices shown in the play. When Ferneze seizes Barabas' property, he establishes a cloistered convent in the Jew's house; such an institution is Catholic rather than Protestant, and the Governor's action may have been regarded by Marlowe's audience as a reversal of that of Henry VIII of England, who had siezed the houses of religious orders and put them to the nation's use, including the establishment of the King's

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<sup>44</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 126.

School at Canterbury. In Marlowe's Malta, in addition to the convent established by Ferneze, there is, according to Ithamore, "a royall Monastery" nearby (l. 1521). This fact also establishes the Catholic character of Malta, the English monasteries having been closed by the Protestant government in England. Finally, in the Malta of this play, the sacrament of Penance is conferred upon Abigail and the dying nuns; in England, The Order of Communion, a document influenced by Lutheran teachings and published by royal command in 1548, had minimized the importance of this sacrament for English Protestants, although it was still available to any who wished it.<sup>45</sup> Since, however, one of the friars remarks that "Canon Law forbids" the revelation of secrets told in confession (ll. 1489-1490), the sacrament would seem beyond doubt to have been administered in the Roman Rite.

Other points, although more circumstantial, indicate that Malta maintains regular connections with Roman Catholic nations. The island has frequently been visited, according to the courtesan Bellamira, by Venetian merchants and Paduan scholars (ll. 1155-1157). The governor, Ferneze, who seems to hold office at the will of the Spanish King, is on friendly terms with Del Bosco, who is specifically designated

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<sup>45</sup>Hughes, A Popular History of the Reformation, pp. 199-200.

"Vizadmirall vnto the Catholike King" (l. 712), and negotiates with him for the aid of the Spanish king in fighting the Turks. These connections with Catholic countries give an indication, however slight, of the religious posture of the island itself. There is the suggestion in the play that Ferneze and his knights belong to a papal military order. Del Bosco asks in surprise, "Will Knights of Malta be in league with Turkes . . . ?" (l. 733). It is possible to take this line to refer to the Papal order of the Knights of Malta, or Knights Hospitallers, an ancient and honorable Roman Catholic society. It is not clear whether Del Bosco means that Ferneze or any of the other characters belongs to this order; more likely, he means only that they are knights and that they live on Malta. But this interpretation does not explain Del Bosco's apparent surprise. Certainly an alliance between members of the order of Knights of Malta, which was formed at the time of the First Crusade, and their Turkish enemies would have been surprising. Although it is not clear whether or not Ferneze and his knights are members of the ancient Papal order, certainly the phrase "Knights of Malta" carries for an audience the suggestion of this society. It is worth noting in this connection that the first line in the play addressed to the Christians begins, "Know Knights of Malta . . ." (l. 231), as if Marlowe wished to drive home to the audience at the

very beginning the Catholic setting of his play.

At the head of this Roman Catholic Malta stands Ferneze, the governor of the island, called by Paul Kocher, "the official voice of Christianity in the drama."<sup>46</sup> Very little critical attention has been paid to the historical sources of this character, and Marlowe's biographer John Bakeless says that Ferneze "cannot be identified with any known figure."<sup>47</sup> Although it is true that there is no single historical figure who can be cited as the model for this character, there is reason for believing that in naming the governor "Ferneze" Marlowe was approximating, in Elizabethan English, with its notoriously cavalier attitude toward the spelling of proper names, the name of Farnese, one of the great families of Renaissance Italy.

The Farneses were a large and notable family in the Italy of the sixteenth century. Two members of the family were of world-wide fame and importance: Alessandro Farnese (1468-1549), better known as Pope Paul III (reigned 1534-1549), and his great-grandson, Alessandro Farnese, Prince of Parma and Piacenza (1543-1592).

Pope Paul III had spent most of his life at the Vatican. According to Philip Hughes, "Innocent VIII had given him a bishopric by the time he was twenty. Alexander VI

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<sup>46</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 120.

<sup>47</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, 336.

made him a cardinal (and Treasurer-general of the Church) at twenty-five. He was highly educated, bred in the family of Lorenzo de' Medici, as the companion of the two future Medici Popes, Leo X and Clement VII."<sup>48</sup>

In his youth, the first Alessandro Farnese lived a life of some luxury. "Michelangelo," Hughes tells us, "built for him the Farnese palace . . . and here the wealthy young cardinal lived, as all too many cardinals lived in the time of the Borgia and della Rovere popes."<sup>49</sup> According to Giovanna R. Solari, the future Pope had, at this time, a staff of 360, including household servants,<sup>50</sup> while Louis Bouyer describes him as a "persistent sensualist."<sup>51</sup> Alessandro was the father, in his youth, of four children, all, apparently, by the same woman, whose identity has never been learned; according to Solari, each of these children was at birth immediately acknowledged, legitimized, and handsomely provided for.<sup>52</sup>

Later in life, and before he was to become Pope, Farnese seems to have reformed. "The General Council of the Lateran (1512-1517)," says Philip Hughes, "where he

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<sup>48</sup>Hughes, A Popular History of the Reformation, p. 211.

<sup>49</sup>Hughes, A Popular History of the Reformation, p. 211.

<sup>50</sup>Giovanna R. Solari, The House of Farnese, trans. Simona Morini and Frederic Tuten (Garden City, N.Y., 1968), p. 16.

<sup>51</sup>Louis Bouyer, Erasmus and His Times, trans. Francis X. Murphy, (Westminster, Md., 1959), p. 52.

<sup>52</sup>Solari, The House of Farnese, p. 16.

played a prominent part, seems to have confirmed his conversion."<sup>53</sup> For the rest of his life, according to Bouyer, he persisted in "habits of piety and austerity."<sup>54</sup> In 1519, at the age of 51, he was ordained a priest and celebrated his first mass. From that point on, says Hughes, Farnese was "decidedly one of the band pledged to ecclesiastical reform."<sup>55</sup>

Modern historians are generally in agreement as to the character of Paul III. Their opinion is conveniently summarized by Philip Hughes, who says that, "He was an instinctive diplomatist, possessed of a very fine and cultivated intelligence and a will of steel. He had great administrative experience, a sure judgement of men, an unerring sense of what was immediately possible, and infinite patience before the disheartening fact that to change men's ways for the better calls for years and years of labour."<sup>56</sup> He seems, moreover, to have been a man acutely aware of the importance of his office and determined to fulfill the duties which that office placed upon him. Once in office, Solari tells us, "he initiated a rigid moral reform, eliminated many ecclesiastical abuses, and founded several new religious

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<sup>53</sup>Hughes, A Popular History of the Reformation, p. 211.

<sup>54</sup>Houyer, Erasmus and His Times, p. 52.

<sup>55</sup>Hughes, A Popular History of the Reformation, p. 211.

<sup>56</sup>Hughes, A Popular History of the Reformation, p. 212.

orders."<sup>57</sup> One of the religious orders with which he was associated was the Society of Jesus, founded by St. Ignatius of Loyola in 1534 and approved by Pope Paul III in 1540.<sup>58</sup> In the opinion of Bouyer, he was "the first Pope seriously intent on reform."<sup>59</sup>

Pope Paul III was himself a humanist and tried to maintain an air of humanism at the Vatican. "Paul III," according to Father Bouyer, "far from breaking with the Renaissance, made a final attempt to enlist its support. What he did, in fact, was to entrust the work to the best among the Christian humanists, those in other words who had separated out all the positive gains of this troubled epoch . . . ."<sup>60</sup> The Farnese Pope seems to have enjoyed a particularly close relationship with one of the great humanists, Desiderius Erasmus. We are told that, "One of the first to congratulate Paul III on his elevation was Erasmus of Rotterdam. In January of 1534 he wrote the Pope from Freiburg expressing his joy at the choice of a man whose forty years of association with the court of Rome and the cardinalate had won for him world renown as a man of

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<sup>57</sup>Solari, The House of Farnese, p. 17.

<sup>58</sup>Bouyer, Erasmus and His Times, p. 52.

<sup>59</sup>Bouyer, Erasmus and His Times, p. 52.

<sup>60</sup>Bouyer, Erasmus and His Times, p. 52.

integrity and learning."<sup>61</sup> In the same letter, Erasmus outlined "his program for reunion and reform." In his opinion, he told the Pope, any council should concentrate on "what constituted the substance of Christian belief."<sup>62</sup> It would seem that the Pope took the opinions of Erasmus seriously because in May, 1535, contemplating a council, he wrote to Erasmus: "We especially exhort you, our son, whom God has adorned with so much talent and learning, to help us in this pious work, which is so much in keeping with your ideas, to defend the Catholic religion both in word and writing before and during the Council. In so doing you will not only crown in the best fashion possible a life of religion and literary productivity, you will also refute your accusers, and rouse your admirers."<sup>63</sup> Erasmus declined this invitation, which Erasmus scholar John P. Dolan says "in all probability contained an offer of cardinal's hat."<sup>64</sup> Beatus Rhenanus, a close friend of Erasmus, wrote a short Life of Erasmus in 1540, in which he described the relations between Erasmus and Paul III, including the offer of a cardinalate to Erasmus, as well as other offers of papal

<sup>61</sup> John P. Dolan, History of the Reformation: A Conciliatory Assessment of Opposite Views (New York, 1967), p. 316.

<sup>62</sup> Dolan, History of the Reformation, p. 316.

<sup>63</sup> John P. Dolan, ed., The Essential Erasmus (New York, 1964), p. 23.

<sup>64</sup> Dolan, The Essential Erasmus, p. 23.

patronage, all of which Erasmus humbly refused.<sup>65</sup>

Another great name of the period associated with that of Pope Paul III is St. John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, who in April, 1534, was in an English prison as a suspected enemy of Henry VIII. On May 22, 1535, Paul III made him a cardinal. A month later, on June 22, Fisher was beheaded for refusing to acknowledge the king as the supreme head on earth of the Church of England.<sup>66</sup>

One of the Farnese Pope's prime concerns, of course, was the schism that had separated Germany and England from Rome. Philip Hughes points out that nineteen months after his elevation to the Papacy, Paul III published a bull calling for a general council, to be held at Mantua in 1537.<sup>67</sup> This was evidently the council to which the Pope had invited Erasmus. Due to complicated problems, this council was postponed until 1538 and the meeting place changed to Vicenza.<sup>68</sup> The European political turmoil of the times, including opposition from Henry VIII, who negotiated with Germany in hopes of preventing the council from convening,<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>Quoted by John C. Olin, ed., Desiderius Erasmus, Christian Humanism and the Reformation (New York, 1965), p. 45.

<sup>66</sup>Hughes, A Popular History of the Reformation, p. 182.

<sup>67</sup>Hughes, A Popular History of the Reformation, p. 212.

<sup>68</sup>Hughes, A Popular History of the Reformation, p. 212.

<sup>69</sup>Hughes, A Popular History of the Reformation, p. 187.

and many differences of opinion within the College of Cardinals itself, made the calling of an ecumenical council very difficult. Finally, the council was solemnly opened at Trent on December 13, 1545, as Philip Hughes says, "just about eleven years since Paul III, in the first hours of his reign, had announced that to bring it about would be his first objective as pope."<sup>70</sup> This is not the place to discuss the importance of, or the issues involved in, the Council of Trent. The principal fact is that the Council was of vital importance to Christian leaders of the time; this being so, it would be wrong to deny that the name of the man who had convened the Council, the same Pope who had implicitly approved the actions of Cardinal Fisher only a month before his martyrdom, was unknown in Tudor England.

But even better known in Elizabethan England was the name of the Pope's great-grandson, Alessandro Farnese, third Prince of Parma and Piacenza. Again, modern historians are agreed on the reputation of the Prince of Parma.

Typical is this description by Garrett Mattingly:

In war he was easily the first captain of his age. Of his soldiership his contemporaries noted chiefly his dash, his courage, his physical toughness, his readiness to share danger and hardship with his men. Less often they mention

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<sup>70</sup>Hughes, A Popular History of the Reformation, p. 220.

the speed and sense of timing which dismayed his enemies and the patience and tenacity with which he held on to an objective once he had decided it was worth the cost. Scarcely ever do they hint at the powers of intellectual analysis and organisation which lifted the art of war to a level which the sixteenth century saw but rarely. Parma had an unrivalled sense of terrain, and if his soldiers grumbled that they did more work with shovels than with pikes, Parma knew just when a stream diverted, a dike broken, a new canal dug might yield the result he wanted more than a bloody victory. Spread out in Parma's mind was a strategic map of the Netherlands and all the intricate network of its communication by land and water, so that while previous commanders . . . seem to have blundered about the Low Countries like belligerent schoolboys in a strange thicket, each of Parma's moves was calculated and controlled by a workable, orderly plan.<sup>71</sup>

Apart from his renown for skill in military affairs, however, Alessandro Farnese may have been famous in his time as a member of a prominent European family. As we have seen, his great-grandfather had been Pope. His mother was the illegitimate daughter of Emperor Charles V and the widow of Alessandro de' Medici,<sup>72</sup> and through these links, the young Alessandro Farnese was nephew to the hero of the Battle of Lepanto.

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<sup>71</sup>Garrett Mattingly, The Armada (Boston, 1959), pp. 42-43.

<sup>72</sup>Solari, The House of Farnese, pp. 33-34.

Don Juan of Austria, another illegitimate child of Charles V.<sup>73</sup> By his marriage to Maria Daviz of Portugal, Farnese was also related to Philip II of Spain. According to Giovanna Solari, it is certain that this marriage was an affair of politics, aimed at an alliance between Parma and Spain.<sup>74</sup> Unquestionably relationships to so many important person-ages could have furthered Farnese's military career; but it was evidently Alessandro's skill in military affairs that made his Uncle, Don Juan of Austria, commander of the Spanish forces in the Netherlands, summon Farnese to join him in Flanders in 1577, and, when Don Juan was dying of typhoid fever shortly thereafter, that made him entrust his command to his nephew Alessandro Farnese.<sup>75</sup>

We have already seen Garrett Mattingly's evaluation of Farnese's military performance in the Low Countries. But Farnese's talents were to prove as great in the realm of politics as in that of tactics. Solari tells us that Farnese was able ". . . to accomplish that at which every-one before him had failed; to rule Flanders in the name of the hated king of Spain. Alessandro was the first general of the Spanish army to enter into negotiations with the rebels. His treaties with the Walloons, his laws,

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<sup>73</sup>Solari, The House of Farnese, p. 66.

<sup>74</sup>Solari, The House of Farnese, p. 61.

<sup>75</sup>Solari, The House of Farnese, p. 66.

his efforts to relieve the population from the suffering of war, his efforts to improve agriculture, the trade he encouraged between conquered provinces and rebellious ones -- all this is part of Flanders' history. To study it in depth would be to explain the subtle political capacity of the Duke of Parma . . . .<sup>76</sup>

Before 1578, historians agree, Farnese had conceived the idea of an invasion of England. His plan was to surprise England with 30,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry, conveyed from Flanders across the Channel in barges under cover of darkness. Once in England, he reasoned, his army would receive support from English Catholics. At last Farnese decided that the plan could work only with the protection of a fleet to be provided by Philip II of Spain. Thus was the idea of the Spanish Armada born.<sup>77</sup> After the failure of the Armada, the King of Spain decided to commit himself more heavily to the Catholic cause in France and therefore sent an army, commanded by Alessandro Farnese, into France to suppress the Huguenots.<sup>78</sup> Very soon after, Farnese died after a long bout of illness.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Solari, The House of Farnese, p. 68.

<sup>77</sup>Mattingly, The Armada, p. 47; p. 77.

<sup>78</sup>Solari, The House of Farnese, p. 82.

<sup>79</sup>Solari, The House of Farnese, p. 59.

Farnese's interest in England and English problems seems to have been intense; Mattingly tells us that Farnese had informants in London and at the court of Queen Elizabeth.<sup>80</sup> As early as 1577, according to Mattingly, Farnese and his uncle Don Juan of Austria were involved in "a conspiracy to combine Scotland and the English Catholics, the Pope, the Guises and the King of Spain in support of Queen Mary."<sup>81</sup> Don Juan, in fact, "was obsessed with the idea of a dash across the narrow seas to rescue the Queen of Scots, and a triumphal march on London to dethrone Elizabeth and re-establish the ancient faith."<sup>82</sup> One desired result of such a move was that Mary Stuart should, in gratitude, marry Don Juan as a means of gaining a stronger foothold for the Catholic cause in Britain.<sup>83</sup>

Another, more tangible, connection between Alessandro Farnese and England is the fact that, after the death of Mary Stuart, in 1586, Queen Elizabeth cautiously carried on secret peace negotiations with him.<sup>84</sup> C. F. Tucker Brooke, in his Life of Marlowe, gives some details about these negotiations:

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<sup>80</sup>Mattingly, The Armada, p. 48.

<sup>81</sup>Mattingly, The Armada, p. 42.

<sup>82</sup>Mattingly, The Armada, p. 41-42.

<sup>83</sup>Mattingly, The Armada, p. 42.

<sup>84</sup>Mattingly, The Armada, p. 86.

In April, 1586, Lord Burghley received a letter from Flanders "through Crofts' servant Morris" to the effect that the Duke of Parma was well disposed towards peace and would presently send someone to England to discuss the matter. During the next year there was a great deal of amiably futile peace talk with Crofts its centre. Burghley, an "apostle of peace," sympathized at least in part, as the Queen did occasionally. Walsingham opposed it tooth and nail, with all the resources of his office. In June, 1587, . . . "Morris, one of Sir James Crofts' servants, came post haste from the Low Countries with the news by word of mouth that Parma was prepared to arrange an armistice." In February, 1588, five commissioners actually went to Ostend to talk matters over with Parma, who<sup>85</sup> . . . merely played with his visitors.

Farnese, then, was quite obviously known, at least, by reason of his high position to the English government. His fame might have spread even further than this in England owing to the fact that it was he who had commanded the Spanish infantry in 1586 in the battle in which Sir Philip Sidney had received his mortal wound.<sup>86</sup> We may assume, then, on the basis of Farnese's general fame that Marlowe must have known of Alessandro Farnese as a military leader and as an opponent of the Protestant cause.

But there is specific evidence of Marlowe's knowledge of the doings of Alessandro Farnese in his reference to the Prince of Parma in Doctor Faustus, when Faustus speaks of

<sup>85</sup>Tucker Brooke, Life of Marlowe, p. 36.

<sup>86</sup>Mattingly, The Armada, p. 45.

his plan to "chase the Prince of Parma from our land" (l. 121). Here, Marlowe evidently expects his audience to recognize the identity of the Prince of Parma, as well as his significance as a Roman Catholic hero. A few lines later, Faustus speaks three lines which may contain a second, although oblique, reference to Farnese:

Yea stranger engines for the brunt of warre,  
Then was the fiery heele at Antwarpes bridge,  
Ile make my seruile spirits to invent . . . .

(ll. 123-125)

This is a reference to a burning ship, the Speranza, filled with explosives that the Flemish had sent to destroy one of Farnese's fortifications on the river Schelde at the siege of Antwerp in 1585. Although the device killed over eight hundred officers and men, the trick was unsuccessful, and Farnese was able to conceal and repair the damage done, thus foiling the Flemish plan.<sup>87</sup>

In this connection it is relevant to note that Alessandro Farnese is generally regarded as a military strategist well ahead of his times in matters of fortification. To quote Giovanna Solari once more:

Alessandro . . . became famous for several things: for the great care he gave to the artillery, for developing the cavalry . . . for the large number of mines he used, for the fortifications he himself designed and sometimes constructed in a few

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<sup>87</sup>Solari, The House of Farnese, p. 73.

hours, and for the ingenuity with which he made use of hydraulic devices. In an era when rivers and waterways were the main lines of communication and bridges had the strategic importance of today's railroad stations, Alessandro was so skillful in deflecting rivers, digging canals, draining ditches and building bridges that he became a hero to writers of treatises on military history.<sup>88</sup>

With this in mind, and the references in Dr. Faustus which we have already seen to the person and career of Alessandro Farnese, we may wonder whether Marlowe had Farnese, with his "skill in deflecting rivers" in mind when he had Faustus tell of his plan to "make swift Rhine circle faire Wertenberge" (l. 117).

We may note incidentally, in connection with Farnese's reputation as an expert on military tactics and strategies that John Bakeless points out that "Tamburlaine's lecture on the art of war, delivered to his sons (II Tamburlaine, ll. 3253-3268) is obviously related to an obscure work on military engineering, The Practice of Fortification, by one Paul Ive."<sup>89</sup> Bakeless surmises elsewhere that Marlowe must have read this work, which was not published until 1589, in manuscript.<sup>90</sup> The speech of Tamburlaine and the segment of Ive's book quoted by Bakeless

<sup>88</sup>Solari, The House of Farnese, pp. 68-69.

<sup>89</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, pp. 210-211.

<sup>90</sup>Bakeless, Christopher Marlowe, p. 66.

are both full of technical material on matters of fortification. It is interesting to find that Marlowe, who knew enough about Alessandro Farnese to put one definite reference to him and one possible reference to his achievements as a tactician into Doctor Faustus, was enough interested in military fortification to have read at least part of a technical book on the subject.

To return to our subject, we have seen that the name Farnese must have been well known in England in Marlowe's time, first as the name of a Pope who strenuously sought the reunification of Christendom and then as that of a well known military figure who had throughout his life been associated with Spain and at times with with the Guise party in France, and who had fought Protestantism on many battlefields, against the Walloons in the Low Countries and against the Huguenots in France, and even had sought to invade England and drive the Protestants from power.

It seems unlikely that the general public was not aware of the name of Farnese. Certainly, since Marlowe refers to the Prince of Parma in Doctor Faustus, Farnese must have been known at least under that title; in using this surname, Marlowe probably intended the character to be representative of a prominent Roman Catholic family whose very name would proclaim him villainous in the eyes

of the Elizabethan audience.

Taking Ferneze, then, as a specifically Catholic character, his name implying connections with the great Catholic rulers of Europe and suggesting especially that of both a Pope and a famous ~~anti~~-Protestant military figure, we should look more closely at Ferneze's actions to see whether they lend any anti-Catholic polemical quality to The Jew of Malta. This is important particularly because, since the Governor of Malta is, as Paul Kocher calls him, "the official voice of Christianity" in the play,<sup>91</sup> Ferneze is our principal point of focus on Maltese society; as such, we may be justified in seeing him as Marlowe's representation not only of Catholic society but of Catholic government everywhere. The principal features of Ferneze's character are those which we have seen presented in earlier Tudor drama as the typical characteristics of the leadership of the Catholic Church. He is a tyrant whose rule is marked by hypocrisy, religious persecution, duplicity in the name of religion and Machiavellian cunning; all of these are vices of which the Tudor stage regularly accused the Catholic Church. The Jew of Malta can be seen as belonging to the tradition of anti-Catholic drama, although only by recognizing such seemingly

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<sup>91</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 120.

uncontroversial aspects of the play, such as the Governor's name, does the play's true attitude become clear to us. But once we see the significance which the name Ferneze must have suggested to the Elizabethan audience, we may attain a clearer focus on the events of The Jew of Malta.

Perhaps the most important defect in Ferneze as a ruler is that he frequently makes promises, only to break them later when it is to his own advantage to do so. Often, it would seem, he has in fact no intention of keeping his promises in the first place. This is a characteristic that Marlowe has elsewhere attributed to Catholic leaders, most notably in the Sigismund episode in the second part of Tamburlaine. Marlowe puts forth the proposition in The Jew of Malta that Catholics believe that they are not bound by a promise made to someone of another religious faith. Barabas himself voices this doctrine when he says, speaking of the Maltese Christians that, "they themselves hold it a principle,/ Faith is not to be held with Heretickes . . ." (ll. 1075-1076). Many of Ferneze's actions in the play indicate that, just as Barabas says, the Governor of Malta subscribes to this belief.

When the play begins, Malta has had a treaty with the Turks for a number of years, although the tributary payments required under the terms of this agreement have been allowed to lapse for the previous ten years. The

Spaniard Martin Del Bosco, "Vizadmirall vnto the Catholicke King" of Spain (l. 711), is surprised to hear that "Knights of Malta" should "be in league with Turkes" (l. 733).

Several explanations are offered for this pact. According to one of Ferneze's knights, this league was entered "but in hope of gold" (l. 731); Ferneze says that the league was necessary because Malta's "force is small" (l. 739). In any event, Del Bosco tells the Governor that the King of Spain, who "hath title to this Isle," intends to expel Ferneze; Del Bosco therefore advises Ferneze to "keepe the gold" which he has taken from the Jews and let Spain answer for the consequences (ll. 742-746). Taking this advice, Ferneze at one time decides not only to repudiate his pact with the Turks but to play fast and loose with the King of Spain, to whom he owes allegiance. Here, Ferneze breaks his promise not only to an infidel, the Turk, but to one of his own faith, the King of Spain.

It is worth pointing out in passing that Del Bosco, who gave Ferneze the guarantee that he could break his promise to the Turks with impunity, also by encouraging Ferneze to keep the Jews' money violates his own loyalty to the King of Spain. Moreover, in the immediate situation, his commitment of Spain's backing for Ferneze is motivated by his own desire to sell the Turkish slaves on Malta; under the terms of Ferneze's pact with the Turks, this would not

have been possible; Del Bosco's primary motivation seems to be that he wishes to have the treaty broken so that he may personally make a profit off the sale of slaves. Furthermore, although Del Bosco has called himself "Vizadmirall vnto the Catholicke King" (1. 712), he evidently changes his loyalty suddenly, much as Sir Thomas Stukeley had done in The Battle of Alcazar, accepting Ferneze's appointment as "Malta's Generall" (1. 749). Again, as in Peele's play, the implied significance seems to be that Catholics are scarcely capable of maintaining loyalty either to "infidels" or to persons of their own faith. Having determined that he is going to repudiate the league with the Turks, Ferneze apostrophizes Calymath, the Prince of Turkey, thus:

Proud-daring Calymath, instead of gold,  
 Wee'll send thee bullets wrapt in smoake and fire:  
 Claime tribute where thou wilt, we are resolu'd,  
 Honor is bought with bloud and not with gold.

(11. 758-761)

Later in the play, we find another instance of the Catholic Governor's making a treaty with an "infidel" when it was advantageous to do so and breaking it when his advantage lies elsewhere. After Malta has fallen to the Turks and Barabas has been appointed the new governor, Ferneze forms a league with the Jew. This agreement is plainly one of convenience on both sides; Barabas realizes that he can maintain his power only by "firme policy"

(1. 2137), by gaining the friendship and support of the Maltese Christians under the leadership of their former Governor; Ferneze says that he will enter in league with Barabas for the good of Malta and his people, though, from what we know of him, we may suspect the sincerity of Ferneze's words. After hearing Barabas' plan for killing Calymath and his men, Ferneze agrees to the plan, saying, "Here is my hand, beleue me, Barabas,/ I will be there, and doe as thou desirest . . ." (11. 2203-2204). Yet as soon as Barabas releases him, Ferneze makes plans with Del Bosco and the Knights of Malta to overthrow Barabas, using the Jew's plan for the destruction of Calymath's men, but intending to kill Barabas himself in the trap set for Calymath and to hold the Turkish Prince for ransom.

Although it may seem wrong to blame Ferneze for breaking his promise of league with Barabas since the promise was made only under duress, it must be admitted that the Governor has been shown earlier in the play to think lightly of the promises that he gives, especially those given to "infidels"; even if his word were not here given under compulsion, it is likely that, as soon as circumstances made such a change profitable, Ferneze would have broken his word in any event. Finally, it must be admitted in connection with Ferneze's promise to Barabas, in fact, seems to be in a generous mood when he solicits the former

Governor's support, so anxious is the Jew to form a league with the Christians.

Ferneze, however, is created in the same mould as was the Emperor Sigismund in the second part of Tamburlaine. Like the Emperor, he seems to feel that an oath made to a non-believer is not binding upon the swearer. This doctrine may also have suggested to the Elizabethan audience the doctrine evidently espoused by the papacy in 1570 when the Pope tried to release Englishmen from their oaths of allegiance to the Queen on the ground that she was a heretic. In both cases, the Roman Catholic view seemed, at least to Englishmen of the sixteenth century, that vows and solemn oaths could be broken according to circumstances; an obvious abuse of such a belief was the relativism that Ferneze seems to practice, the Machiavellian pragmatism which constitutes so great an amount of his character. At the same time, Ferneze does not admit that he is pragmatic, but conceals his true thoughts and motives behind a screen of lies and false reasoning.

For one other important quality of Ferneze and, for that matter, of the Catholics whom he rules is hypocrisy, a characteristic with which Tudor Protestant polemicists had often charged the Catholic Church. The Governor of Malta frequently displays the hypocritical attitude of the pious fraud; sometimes his hypocrisy is so portrayed as to

make one suspect that Ferneze is meant to be seen as a broad lampoon of supposed Roman Catholic attitudes. Generally, Ferneze's hypocrisy can be seen in those episodes in which he takes direct action to get what he wants and afterward justifies his action in the name of justice, righteousness or honor.

For example, when the Governor seizes the property of the Jews in order to pay the tribute to the Turks, he tells Barabas that the Jews are to bear the entire cost of the Tribute because,

. . . through our sufferance of your hateful liues,  
Who stand accursed in the sight of heauen,  
These taxes and afflictions are befall'ne . . . .

(11. 295-297)

Here, evidently, the Governor invokes divine wrath to justify the action which he has already determined to take; he argues that the "taxes and afflictions" are punishments that the Christians must endure because they have allowed the Jews to settle in Malta.

Although at first determined to take only half of the property of each of the Jews, Ferneze evidently decides to seize all of Barabas' property, even though Barabas has agreed, under penalty of having all his goods confiscated and himself forced to become a Christian, to pay the required half. The Governor tells him, "thou hast denied the Articles,/ And now it cannot be recall'd"

(11. 325-326); in fact, Barabas, although at first he had urged his fellow Jews not to submit, has agreed to the Governor's demands. Ferneze, however, having been reminded of the amount of Barabas' wealth, has decided that he wishes to seize all of it. When Barabas accuses him of stealing his property, the Governor replies that

. . . we take particularly thine  
 To saue the ruine of a multitude:  
 And better one want for a common good,  
 Than many perish for a priuate man . . . .

(11. 329-332)

Whether knowingly or not, Ferneze here echoes the words of Caiaphas in the New Testament who justifies the condemnation of Christ on the ground that "it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (John, 12:50). We could hardly compare Barabas to Jesus Christ, but it is not difficult to see Ferneze in the role of Caiaphas; after all, Roman Catholic bishops were conventionally compared with the Scribes and Pharisees of the New Testament in Elizabethan Protestant polemic. Marlowe's audience can hardly have not recognized the source of Ferneze's words here and understood that the author intended them to see the Governor as another manifestation of Roman Catholic hypocrisy after the fashion of the high priest in St. John's Gospel. In making this verbal link between Ferneze and

Caiaphas, Marlowe was following in the tradition of both Bale and Foxe, demonstrating a connection between the modern world and that of the time of Christ; like Bale and his followers in the drama, such as the author of New Custom, Marlowe established a link between the scribes and pharisees of Christ's time and the Roman Catholic leaders of his own.

Having echoed the words of Caiaphas, Ferneze tells Barabas that "we will not banish thee" (l. 333), as if this were, in the circumstances, an act of magnanimity; in fact, banishment has not been previously mentioned as a penalty for failure to comply with the Governor's order to seize the property of the Jews. The Governor continues, "But here in Malta, where thou gotst thy wealth, / Liue still; and if thou canst, get more" (ll. 334-335). When Barabas protests that he cannot do so if the Christians confiscate all his property, leaving him nothing, the First Knight, who seems to be Ferneze's chief counsellor, responds,

From nought at first thou camst to little welth,  
 From little vnto more, from more to most:  
 If your first curse fall heauy on thy head,  
 And make thee poore and scornd of all the world,  
 'Tis not our fault, but thy inherent sinne.

(ll. 338-342)

Thus, even though they themselves, for reasons of expediency, have deprived Barabas of all that he owned, the Governor and his followers are sufficiently hypocritical to

attribute the Jew's sufferings to divine justice; the Catholics in The Jew of Malta see themselves -- or, at any rate, describe themselves when it is expedient to do so -- as the instruments of God's judgement. »

When Barabas objects to being condemned only because he is a Jew, arguing that he has always dealt "righteously" (l. 349), the Governor answers:

Out, wretched Barabas,  
Sham'st thou not thus to iustifie thy selfe,  
As if we knew not thy profession?  
If thou rely vpon thy righteousnesse,  
Be patient and thy riches will increase.

(ll. 351-355)

Once again, the Governor is guilty of hypocritical logic-chopping. On the one hand we have heard that Barabas and the Jews are "accursed in the sight of heauen" (l. 296) and that they are "poore and scornd of all the world" (l. 341); yet the Maltese Christians, even though they claim they have themselves been punished for harboring the Jews, are willing to continue to do so, and the Governor can encourage Barabas to rely upon his righteousness and to make more money. The contradictions in the opinions expressed by the Christians can only be explained by arguing that these people, as portrayed by Marlowe, have no firm convictions but only hold those beliefs which are advantageous to themselves.

But Ferneze goes even further in his hypocrisy

when, having confiscated all of Barabas' property, he tells the Jew that "Excesse of wealth is cause of covetousnesse:/ And covetousnesse, oh 'tis a monstrous sinne" (ll. 355-356). In other words, Ferneze claims that he is doing Barabas a favor in taking away his property, which might otherwise have tempted the Jew to sin. When Barabas responds to this by saying that, having taken all his property, they might as well also take his life, the Governor answers piously that "to staine our hands with blood/ Is farre from vs and our profession" (ll. 377-378). At last, the Governor assures Barabas that he should be content, having received "nought but right" from the Maltese government (l. 385).

Elsewhere in The Jew of Malta the Governor's hypocrisy is demonstrated when Ferneze tells the Bashaw who comes to collect the tribute money that he shall "haue no tribute here,/ Nor shall the Heathens liue vpon our spoyle . . ." (ll. 1431-1432). Here, Ferneze pretends that he is breaking the compact because he does not wish to deal with "Heathens"; but, as we have seen, his motivation is more complex than this, growing out of the assurances that he has received of support from Martin Del Bosco and also out of Ferneze's own desire to keep the money that he has expropriated from the Jews. Yet the Governor here conceals these other motives and pretends that he is repudiating his agreement with the Turks out of religious motives.

Still another instance of Ferneze's hypocrisy may be seen in his lament later in the play that he has fallen into the hands of "a traitor and vnhalloved Iew" (1. 2114). The implied hypocrisy here lies in the fact that as we have seen, the Governor has already himself betrayed his own compact with the Turks, and very soon will betray the agreement that he makes with Barabas.

Again, after the death of Barabas, when Ferneze is once again in power, he denounces the Jew to Calymath:

This traine he laid to haue intrap'd thy life;  
 Now Selim the vnhalloved deeds of Iewes:  
 Thus he determin'd to haue handled thee,  
 But I haue rather chose to saue thy life.

(11. 2375-2378)

Although Ferneze here suggests that he has again performed an act of kindness to the Turk, just as he seemed to feel magnanimous about sparing Barabas from banishment at the beginning of the play, it must be remembered that Ferneze himself had had a hand in preparing the trap and has spared Calymath only in hopes of gaining a military advantage over the Turks. It is worth pointing out that the Maltese Governor does not, in spite of his generosity and piety, consider sparing the lives of the Turkish soldiers whose deaths Ferneze attributes to "A Iewes curtesie" (1. 2394). Moreover, in his speech denouncing Barabas to Calymath, Ferneze, while saying that Jews are untrustworthy,

seems to have forgotten that it is not long since he had himself, like Barabas, violated a pact with the Turk.

But Ferneze shows his ultimate hypocrisy in the closing lines of the play when he says that, for their victory over both the Turks and the Jew, the Christians should "let due praise be giuen/ Neither to Fate nor Fortune, but to Heauen" (ll. 2409-2410). While the Governor's lines may be rhetorically effective, even seeming to be merely a conventional recognition of the divine ordering of the affairs of earth, close examination of the play shows that the Christians' victory is not due to divine intervention but to the Machiavellian cunning and political conniving of Ferneze.

So far we have looked at the faults of character demonstrated in the play by the Governor of Malta. It may also be profitable to our understanding of Marlowe's treatment of this personage to examine his relation to certain aspects of the New Testament and also his standing as a Machiavellian figure.

I have already mentioned Ferneze's echoing of the words of Caiaphas in his remark that "better one want for a common good,/ Than many perish for a priuate man" (ll. 331-332). But this is not the only point in the play when Ferneze may rightly be compared with an unchristian figure from the New Testament. The Governor's actions sometimes

paralleled those of characters in the parables of Christ.

For instance, in one parable, Christ tells of a king, who, taking account of his servants, found that one who owed him ten thousands talents was unable to pay. When the king threatened to sell this servant, along with his wife, children and property, to make up the debt, the servant prostrated himself before the king and begged for mercy. At this the king in the parable "was moved with compassion, and loosed him and forgave him the debt." But, having been forgiven his own debt, the same servant, meeting another servant who owed him one hundred pence and could not pay, refused to show mercy and had the second servant put into prison. When the king heard of this, he punished the first servant for not showing the same compassion which he had sought for himself. (Matthew, 18:23-34).

While the circumstances differ widely, there is a fairly obvious echo of this parable in The Jew of Malta, where the Governor, having asked the Turks for time in which to find the money owed to them, is granted "a little curtesie" (l. 252) by Calymath, on the ground that it is "more Kingly to obtaine by peace/ Then to enforce conditions by constraint" (ll. 254-255). Here, Calymath fulfils the role of the king in the parable, showing mercy and patience, even though he does not, as in the parable, forgive the debt; Ferneze, on the other hand, is in the position of the

servant begging not that he be not sold, but that the Turks not invade Malta.

In the subsequent part of this episode in the play, the Governor having received Calymath's mercy, acts towards the Jews as the servant did toward his own debtor in the parable, not by casting them into prison, but by using threats of enforced conversion to Catholicism and of total, instead of partial, seizure of their property. In the case of Barabas, Ferneze does in fact confiscate all of his goods, leaving him seemingly destitute, if not actually imprisoning him. Moreover, Calymath's temporary conquest of the Christians and his forcing them to submit to the authority of Barabas may suggest the king's punishment of the servant in the parable by delivering him "to his tormentors" to be punished. Although the parallel is not exact between this parable and The Jew of Malta, there is enough of a parallel structure to imply that Marlowe intended to suggest the parable of the unjust servant.

Some of the Governor's actions in The Jew of Malta also suggest the parable of the servant of a master who is away for a long period of time, who uses his master's property and servants as if they were his own. This servant is also to be punished when his master returns home (Matthew, 24:45-51). This parable can be seen as parallel to the Governor's not having paid the tribute to the Turks for ten years,

having instead used the money, which rightfully belonged to the Turks, to pay for "the warres, that robb'd our store . . ." (1. 278). Although this parable is brief and merely suggestive of the situation in The Jew of Malta, there seems to be a strong enough parallel for us to take this as a reference to the New Testament, intended to make a Christian audience turn instinctively against Ferneze from the beginning of the play.

In both of these instances of parallels to the parables of Christ, Marlowe, as he had done before in making the Governor echo the words of Caiaphas, seems consciously to link the world of The Jew of Malta, with the world of the New Testament three times, and in doing so manages to suggest that the modern Roman Catholic Governor of Malta -- and by extension the society for which he stands -- fulfils the role of the High Priest of the life of Christ and of the two unjust servants from Christ's parables. It seems likely that Marlowe's training at the King's School and at Cambridge made him see the possibilities inherent in such a paralleling of events to demonstrate that the modern Catholic was nothing but a New Testament scribe or pharisee in modern dress.

Another sign of Ferneze's villainy is Marlowe's characterization of him as Machiavellian ruler whose every action is determined by the desire to maintain power.

Although the general question of Machiavellianism does not fit within the scope of this study, I would like to make a few comments about Machiavellianism in The Jew of Malta. This can perhaps be justified by the fact that the Elizabethans tended to regard Machiavellian thought as in some way "Catholic" perhaps simply because Machiavelli himself was Italian and a Catholic, or perhaps because of Machiavelli's link with the Borgia family through his avowed admiration for Cesare Borgia, whose political activities formed the basis for parts of Machiavelli's The Prince.<sup>92</sup> A few brief words about the Machiavellianism of Ferneze in The Jew of Malta are justifiable because, in understanding this element of Ferneze's character, we are better able to understand certain portions of the play, especially the prologue spoken by Machiavelli himself, which cannot become completely clear without a consideration of the events and characters of the play.

Near the beginning of the play, before the Governor has made his first appearance on the stage, the First Jew says of Ferneze's summons of all the Jews to the council house that "'twas done of policie" (1. 178). The First Knight, who, as I have already said, seems to be the Governor's chief counsellor, also refers to Ferneze's plan

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<sup>92</sup>Max Lerner, "Introduction" to Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses (New York, 1950), p. xxvi.

for seizing the Jews' belongings as "but simple policie" (1. 392). All the Governor's actions, in fact, are done because of "policy," the word which for the Elizabethans connoted not merely a reasoned plan but an outline of action marked by cunning, disregard for objective morality and the desire to grasp and maintain power ruthlessly, no matter what the cost. The word "policy" is one of the important terms in the understanding of Elizabethan thought because, especially in the theatre, it was a word that was heavy with emotional overtones; in almost every instance of the word's use in Elizabethan literature, it carries a suggestion of Machiavellian pragmatism. To accuse someone of using "policy" was almost the same as an accusation of immorality. The fact that the Governor of Malta is twice described as using "policy," once before he is first mentioned and once by a member of his own party -- even aside from Barabas' accusation of the same thing (1. 393), echoing the words of the First Knight -- must have indicated to Marlowe's original audience that Ferneze was to be seen as a Machiavellian; his association through his name with some of the leading Roman Catholic figures of Europe can only have reinforced this impression.

In the prologue, Machiavelli himself appears to introduce the play, speaking of the hypocrisy of those who denounce him and his works. It is interesting that

Machiavelli specifically places this hypocrisy into a Roman Catholic setting when he says:

Admir'd I am of those that hate me most.  
 Though some speak openly against my bookes,  
 Yet will they reade me, and thereby attaine  
 To Peters Chayre: And when they cast me off,  
 Are poyson'd by my climbing followers.

(11. 9-13)

The specific reference to poison and the papacy suggests the Borgia family, notorious for their alleged use of poison against their enemies. Furthermore, the suggestion of attaining the papacy by criminal means cannot have seemed all that farfetched to an audience that had available to it John Bale's The Pageant of Popes.

Although it is plain that Barabas is a Machiavellian villain, it must also be agreed that he is not the only one in this play, nor is he the most Machiavellian, if that term admits of comparison. While Barabas is two-faced, a traitor, a hypocrite, a murderer and so on, he is not so successful at his Machiavellian endeavors as is Ferneze, who must be judged the greatest Machiavellian if only because he is the most ruthless, the least trusting and, in the end, the most successful character in the play. Barabas, in fact, trusts too many people, including Ithamore and the Governor himself, both of whom eventually betray him.

If it is possible to fit the play into any framework

suggested by Machiavelli's prologue, Barabas must be seen as one who aspires to power, only to be destroyed by Machiavelli's "climbing followers" (l. 13), the ambitious follower in The Jew of Malta being surely Ferneze.

Ferneze then, the representative and leader of a Catholic community, is a hypocrite and a betrayer of his own word. In those actions of his which we have examined, he may also be seen to be avaricious, a tyrant, and perhaps a persecutor of the Jews. As we have seen, all of Ferneze's vices and immoral acts, including hypocrisy, false oaths, avarice, tyranny and religious persecution were characteristics attributed by the Elizabethans to the Church of Rome. This being so, the Governor should be seen as another Catholic villain like the Duke of Guise in The Massacre at Paris. If Ferneze is not as memorable a character as was the Guise, it is perhaps because there is not as sharp a focus on him in The Jew of Malta as there was on the instigator of the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre. Nevertheless, there is a clear connection between the two plays in that the leading Catholic figures in both plays are ruthless, Machiavellian villains.

In The Jew of Malta, Marlowe also exhibits his anti-Catholicism in the treatment of the Roman Catholic clergy, which is represented by the "two religious Caterpillers" (l. 1529), the friars Iacomo and Barnardino, and by the

Abbess of the convent.<sup>93</sup> The Abbess speaks but a few lines, containing little but information necessary to further the action of the plot. Marlowe's depiction of Catholic religious in The Jew of Malta, then, is found largely in his portrayal of the two friars. In the behavior of these two, Marlowe draws upon the Tudor tradition of conventionally corrupt Roman Catholic churchmen; somehow, though, Iacomo and Barnardino seem even more corrupt than the monks and friars that we have so far seen in other plays of the Tudor period.

As we have seen, one of the traditional forms of attack on the celibate Catholic clergy was the charge of lechery. Marlowe, who never seems comfortable in dealing with sexual passion on the stage, provides little of this type of jest in The Jew of Malta. Unless we assume a good deal of bawdy in the unrecorded stage business performed by the friars and a certain ironical reading of such innocuous lines as Iacomo's "Virgo, salve" (l. 1273), apparently accompanied by a deep bow, there is very little imputation of licentiousness to Marlowe's friars. A few passages which tend in this direction, however, can be

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<sup>93</sup>Another friar and another nun evidently appear in the play (s.d. 544) but have no lines of dialogue if, as seems likely, "I Nun" (l. 547) and the Abbess are the same person; neither the third friar nor the second nun is mentioned again in the play. For the sake of clarity, I have generally called the friars by name rather than, as is usual in the text, "first" and "second" friar. Thus, the First Friar is here called Iacomo and the Second Friar Barnardino.

recorded; when Iacomo, speaking of Abigail's supposed conversion to Christianity says, "No doubt, brother, but this proceedeth of the spirit" (l. 255), Barnardino's response, "I,/ And of a moving spirit too, brother" (ll. 568-569), the exchange can, I suppose, be taken as mildly bawdy.

Later in the play, when the nuns have been poisoned and are dying, Barnardino's comment about the Abbess, who has asked to receive the sacrament of penance, "Oh what a sad confession will there be" (l. 1460) could also be made to sound slightly bawdy. More clearly intended to suggest lechery on the part of the friars are Iacomo's reference in the same scene to one of the nuns as "faire Maria" (l. 1461) and Barnardino's response to Abigail's statement, "I dye a Christian" (l. 1496); "I," says the Friar, "and a Virgin too, that grieues me most" (l. 1497).

The Jew of Malta contains at least three other references to lust among the nuns and friars, although all of these are clearly meant as comic relief. The first of these is found in Barabas' words to Lodowicke, to whom he has said that the Governor has made the Jew's house "a place for Nuns most chast" (l. 840). When Lodowicke assures him that "No doubt your soule shall reape the fruit of it" (l. 841), Barabas turns his comment into a suggestive double-entendre, saying:

I, but my Lord, the haruest is farre off:  
 And yet I know the prayers of those Nuns  
 And holy Fryers, hauing mony for their paines,  
 Are wondrous; . . . .  
 And seeing they are not idle, but still doing,  
 'Tis likely they in time may reape some fruit,  
 I meane in fulnesse of perfection.

(11. 842-848).

In case the audience has missed the suggestion of lechery in these words, Marlowe has Lodowicke caution Barabas to "glance not at our holy Nuns" (1. 849). Another imputation of lustful behavior among the nuns and monks is suggested by Ithamore when he puts what he calls a "very feeling" question to Abigail, whether or not the nuns have "fine sport with the Fryars now and then" (11. 1254-1255). Later, after the deaths of the nuns, when Ithamore offers also to poison the monks, Barabas tells him that this is needless because "now the Nuns are dead," the monks will "dye with griefe" (11. 1523-1524).

The lust for wealth, which motivates nearly every other character in play, is perhaps the primary motive of Iacomo and Barnardino, the two friars in this play. This is shown most clearly when, after Abigail's death, the two visit Barabas to accuse him obliquely of having plotted the deaths of Lodowicke and Mathias. Barabas, having realized that the two friars know of his guilt, decides to deflect their attention from the murders he has committed by putting on a show of repentance for his past misdeeds,

while incidentally informing the friars of the vast amount of riches which he has amassed through his life of sin. He tells them:

I haue beene zealous in the Iewish faith,  
 Hard harted to the poore, a couetous wretch,  
 That would for Lucars sake haue sold my soule.  
 A hundred for hundred I haue tane,  
 And now for store of wealth may I compare  
 With all the Iewes in Malta; but what is wealth?  
 I am a Iew, and therefore am I lost.  
 Would pennance serue for this my sinne,  
 I could afford to whip my selfe to death.

. . . . .  
 To fast, to pray, and weare a shirt of haire,  
 And on my knees creepe to Ierusalem.  
 Cellars of Wine and Sollers full of Wheat,  
 Ware-houses stult with spices and with drugs,  
 Whole Chests of Gold, in Bulloine, and in Coyne,  
 Besides I know not how much weight in Pearle  
 Orient and round, haue I within my house;  
 At Alexandria, Merchandize unsold:  
 But yesterday two ships went from this Towne,  
 Their voyage will be worth ten thousand Crownes.  
 In Florence, Venice, Antwerpe, London, Ciuill,  
Frankeford, Lubecke, Mosco, and where not,  
 Haue I debts owing; and in most of these,  
 Great summes of mony lying in the bancho . . . .

(ll. 1560-1583)

I quote this lengthy passage to show first how skillfully Barabas, who understands the friars better than they know, manipulates the feelings of his listeners. Beginning with the catalogue of his sins, he starts to discuss the various kinds of penitence open to him. This is meant to demonstrate to the Friars Barabas' sincerity and his knowledge of Catholic penitential practices. At the same time, we may imagine, Marlowe, through Barabas, is holding these same practices, together with the implicit

Roman Catholic doctrine of personal atonement for sins, up to the scorn of the theatre audience. But having attracted the attention of the friars with his talk of sin and atonement, Barabas quickly changes from those subjects to that of his wealth, dropping the bait in front of the friars when he says, "All this I'll giue to some religious house/ So I may be baptiz'd and liue therein" (ll. 1584-1585). As Barabas surely expected, the two men now forget about his sins, including the murder of Lodowicke and Mathias, and begin competing with one another for Barabas' favor, each wishing to acquire the Jew's wealth for his own religious order. This competition leads the two friars to fight with one another (s.d. 1605), just as Abigail's two suitors had come to fight each other, manipulated by Barabas. At last, Barabas separates the friars, telling each one privately that he is to receive the Jew's money.

In the scene which I have just described, Marlowe presents a comic treatment of Roman Catholic clerical avarice. But the consequences of this scene, although grotesquely comic, are quite serious. Marlowe demonstrates how the extreme avarice of the friars leads them to violence and to death. At the end of the previous scene, Iacomo and Barnadino were already fighting one another to gain access to Barabas' money. Because of their quarrel, when Iacomo later sees the body of Barnardino, who has been

strangled by Barabas and Ithamore and left standing, propped up, outside Barabas' door, he thinks that Barnardino is alive and waiting to attack him. Iacomo says that his rival,

. . . vnderstanding I should come this way,  
Stands here a purpose, meaning me some wrong,  
And intercept my going to the Iew . . . .

(11. 1674-1676)

Receiving no answer when he commands Barnardino to stand aside, he says:

No, wilt thou not? nay then I'll force my way;  
And see, a staffe stands ready for the purpose:  
As thou lik'st that, stop me another time.

(11. 1680-1682)

Iacomo now attacks Barnardino and knocks him to the ground, apparently killing him. Thus, Marlowe demonstrates how easily the Catholic clergymen can be driven to violence and even to apparent homicide, even though the victim be another Catholic clergyman, when once their avarice has been aroused.

Avarice, however, is a crime for which, in effect, Marlowe denounces all the Christian characters in The Jew of Malta. There are some crimes for which Marlowe attacks the monks which only they, among the characters of the play, are capable of committing by virtue of their priestly powers. In his emphasis on the fact that Iacomo and Barnardino are priests and on the privileges and powers

which their office confers on them, Marlowe is once again making use of Tudor anti-Catholic theatrical convention.

In particular, I refer to the use of the Catholic sacrament of penance and the abuses of it which lead to the deaths of the two friars. This sacrament had been rejected by the Elizabethan bishops and all references to it had been removed from the English Prayer Book.<sup>94</sup> Bishop Jewel had denied that penance was a sacrament at all, but rather argued that it was a corrupt practice which had been allowed to flourish in the church; Bishop Jewel further argued that the practice of auricular confession should be discontinued.<sup>95</sup> That this practice was regarded as a Roman Catholic perversion of the religion instituted by Christ is clear from the words of Thomas Rogers, who says, "The blasphemies are outrageous, and the errors many and monstrous, comprised in this doctrine of popish penance . . . . To confess all sins, and that one after another with all circumstances, unto a priest, as it is impossible, so is it never enjoined by God, nor hath ever been practiced

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<sup>94</sup>W. P. M. Kennedy, Parish Life Under Queen Elizabeth (St. Louis, Mo., 1914), p. 150.

<sup>95</sup>John Ayre, ed., The Works of John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, Parker Society Publications, Vol. 24 (New York, 1968), II, p. 1133. I am quoting here from Jewel's A Treatise of the Sacraments.

by any of God's saints."<sup>96</sup>

The fact that auricular confession is practiced at all in Marlowe's Malta is reason enough for his audience to have regarded his monks as irreligious. More than this, as seriously as the monks claim to regard confession, they seem to take a light view of it in practice. When the dying Abigail constrains Barnardino to reveal nothing that she tells him in her confession, he explains to her one of the rules of the sacrament, saying,

Know that confession must not be reueal'd,  
The Canon Law forbids it, and the Priest  
That makes it known, being degraded first,  
Shall be condemn'd and then sent to the fire.

(11. 1489-1492)

Barnardino reiterates this theme when he says to Iacomo that he has heard something about Barabas in Abigail's confession, which he is not about to repeat because, "Thou know'st 'tis death and if it be reueal'd" (1. 1507).

It is not clear whether, between scenes, Barnardino reveals to Iacomo what Abigail had told him about the deaths of Lodowick and Mathias. Certainly he tells him that Barabas has done "A thing that makes me tremble to vnfold" (1. 1504), but we do not know whether he tells

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<sup>96</sup>Thomas Rogers, The Catholic Doctrine of the Church of England: An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles, ed. J. J. S. Perowne, Parker Society Publications, Vol. 40 (New York, 1968), p. 257. Although The Catholic Doctrine was not published in this form until 1607, it had originally been published in two parts, in 1579 and 1585 respectively.

Iacomo any more than this.<sup>97</sup>

It is difficult to say whether, in their confrontation with Barabas, Barnardino technically violates the seal of the confessional; certainly, it would seem, he abuses the privilege of the institution because, although he does not actually repeat what Abigail has said, Barnardino drops enough hints to let Barabas know that he has learned about the plot against Lodowicke and Mathias. "Barabas, remember Mathias and Don Lodowicke," says Barnardino, adding, "I will not say by a forged challenge they met" (ll. 1552-1554). In this last statement, of course, Barnardino is playing with words, saying what he wishes to say, but in a form that ensures that he would afterward be able to deny having said such a thing. This is casuistry, a practice of which the Catholic clergy and Catholic monarchs were often accused.

In regard to this meeting between Barabas and the friars, we may wonder just what purpose the friars had hoped that such a confrontation would accomplish. A clue is perhaps to be found in Barnardino's words, after the

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<sup>97</sup>When Barnardino tells him this, Iacomo asks whether Barabas has "orucified a child" (l. 1505). This response may have been suggested by Foxe's Actes and Monuments, where several incidents are recorded of Jews having been executed for such an offense; the first such incident was in Lincoln, in August, 1255, when a child is alleged to have actually been crucified; in the second such event, supposedly a number of Jews kidnapped a child with the alleged intention of crucifying him. Foxe, Actes and Monuments, II, p. 534.

death of Abigail, "I must to the Iew and exclaime on him,  
And make him stand in feare of me" (ll. 1498-1499). The  
best explanation of Barnardino's motivation here seems to  
be that he wishes to use the information which he has  
received in Abigail's confession as a means of exercising  
power over the wealthy Barabas, presumably for the purpose  
of extorting money from him. If this is true, -- and as  
an interpretation it has the virtue of being consistent  
with what we know about nearly all the characters in  
Marlowe's Malta -- then Barabas, immediately understanding  
the monk, took exactly the right steps to lead him to his  
downfall. The only other probable explanation of the  
monks' seeking this meeting with Barabas is that they  
wished to frighten him into confessing his crime to the  
authorities; but this seems an unlikely result in the light  
both of Barabas' character and of the general opinion of  
Jews held in Marlowe's time. If my first interpretation  
is correct, the episode would reflect, not only the  
general avarice of the Maltese society depicted by Marlowe  
in the other scenes of the play, but also one of the common  
fears of auricular confession in Elizabethan England: that  
the practice provided the priest with power, not only over  
those who confessed to him, but also over those about whom  
he might receive secret information in the confessional.  
Moreover, I believe that one of the reasons that Barabas

and Ithamore, in the murder of the friars, whether through direct or indirect action, do not arouse disgust or horror in the audience or reader is the fact that both Iacomo and Bernardino get what they deserve, even according to the terms of the rules that they describe regarding the secrecy of confession. The fact that they are using their positions as priests to gain wealth, either through blackmail or through simony, in effect selling Barabas forgiveness for his sins in exchange for his vast riches, makes them even more unsympathetic, particularly to an Elizabethan audience which by now expected Roman Catholic clergymen in plays to be villainous.

Finally, when Iacomo is discovered with the body of Barnardino, whom he thinks that he has killed, he asks Barabas and Ithamore to help him escape the legal consequences of his supposed action. When they refuse to conceal his "crime," and they threaten to carry him to the court, he falls back on the special legal status which he enjoys as a priest, saying "I am a sacred person, touch me not" (l. 1711). This must have seemed particularly outrageous to an Elizabethan audience, for having already demonstrated his own avarice, lechery, wrath, jealousy, envy and simony, for Iacomo to call himself "sacred" appears merely hypocritical.

Yet another anti-Catholic element in The Jew of Malta is Marlowe's choice of a name for Barabas' servant,

Ithamore. This is a very unusual name and it has been frequently pointed out that it is the name of an English saint, St. Ithamar, Bishop of Rochester, "a man of Kent," Bede tells us, who was consecrated bishop about 644, A.D.<sup>98</sup> Butler's Lives of the Saints tells us that "St. Ithamar has a special claim upon our interest, because he was the first Englishman to occupy an English bishopric."<sup>99</sup> In 655, St. Ithamar consecrated another Englishman, Frithona, also known as Deusdedit, to be archbishop of Canterbury. St. Ithamar is believed to have died in 656. "On account of his reputation for miracles, several churches were dedicated in his honour, and his relics were enshrined in 1100."<sup>100</sup> Further historical information about St. Ithamar is scarce. He is mentioned by name twice in Bede's Ecclesiastical History<sup>101</sup> and all other historical writers seem to have drawn their material from these passages.

There are, however, several non-historical references to St. Ithamar. One of these is the manuscript Miracula Sancti Ithamari, which was once part of Archbishop Parker's collection and which reposed in the library of Corpus

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<sup>98</sup> Bede, A History of the English Church and People, tr. Leo Sherley-Price (Baltimore, Md., 1955), p. 160.

<sup>99</sup> Herbert Thurston, S.J., and Donald Attwater, eds., Butler's Lives of the Saints, Complete Edition, Revised and Supplemented (New York, 1956), II, p. 518.

<sup>100</sup> Thurston and Attwater, Butler's Lives of the Saints, II, p. 518.

<sup>101</sup> Bede, A History of the English Church and People, p. 160; p. 172.

Christi College when Marlowe was a student there. According to John Bakeless, the Corpus Christi copy is "The only one in existence."<sup>102</sup> Naturally, as he points out "there is obviously no means of showing that Marlowe ever read it."<sup>103</sup>

It is not clear whether, as seems likely, the Corpus Christi manuscript compilation of St. Ithamar's miracles is the "considerable catalogue (compiled in the twelfth century) of miracles wrought at this shrine" which is referred to in Butler's Lives of the Saints.<sup>104</sup> But whether it is the same manuscript or not, "a compendium" of the twelfth century manuscript was incorporated by Capgravius in his Nova Legenda Anglie, published in London in 1516.<sup>105</sup>

Since a compendium of the miraculous acts of St. Ithamar was in print, and since churches were dedicated to him and his relics were preserved and enshrined, it

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<sup>102</sup>Bakeless, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, p. 346.

<sup>103</sup>Bakeless, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, p. 346.

<sup>104</sup>Bakeless, The Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, II, p. 518.

<sup>105</sup>Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina Antiquae et Mediae Aetatis ediderunt Socii Bollandiani (Bruxelles, 1898-1899), I, p. 667. See also, Thurston and Attwater, Butler's Lives of the Saints, II, p. 518.

seems not unlikely that Marlowe, in his native Kent, and in a city as full of old religious tradition as Canterbury, might have heard of this famous Kentishman whose miraculous deeds had been the object of Roman Catholic devotion in the past. What little information is available about the devotion to St. Ithamar and his relics indicates that it may have been typical of the kind of devotion denounced by Protestant reformers in the sixteenth century as Roman Catholic superstitious practice. In giving to his monstrous and grotesque creation the name of one of Britain's early native Catholic saints, Marlowe may have shocked the simple and pious, the recusant Catholic or the outlawed Jesuit priest, but he only could have pleased the earnest Protestant zealot who wished to see the last traces of Roman Catholicism obliterated from England.

The Ithamore of this play introduces himself to Barabas by listing a catalogue of his own misdeeds. Unlike the St. Ithamar of legend, renowned for his miracles, Marlowe's character is known rather for his evil doings, such as "setting Christian villages on fire" and cutting the throats of travellers. He tells Barabas:

Once at Ierusalem, where the pilgrims kneel'd,  
I strowed powder on the Marble stones,  
And therewithall their knees would ranckle, so  
That I have laugh'd agood to see the cripples  
Goe limping home to Christendome on stilts.

Thus, although the historical Ithamar is himself the object of veneration, Marlowe's Ithamore mocks shrines and pilgrims and the kind of devotion that the Elizabethan Protestant would have derided as superstition.

The contemporary audience, of course, probably laughed with Ithamore at this trick played on the Catholic pilgrims, rather than being shocked at the cruelty and horror of it. They must also have enjoyed other humor at the expense of Catholics and the Catholic Church to be found in this play.

Thus, as our examination of Marlowe's plays demonstrates, nearly all of Marlowe's plays contains at least a trace of the common Elizabethan anti-Catholic bias. Moreover, the plays that contain the greatest amounts of this element are The Massacre at Paris and The Jew of Malta; but large portions of Elizabethan anti-Catholicism are present also in Tamburlaine, part two, in Edward the Second and in Doctor Faustus. Even in the first part of Tamburlaine there is evidence that Marlowe's attitude toward certain of his materials was formed by his reading Foxe's treatment of some of the same materials in Actes and Monuments. This leaves only the collaborative adaptation of Virgil in The Tragedy of Dido untouched by the English Protestant hatred of the Church of Rome.

All that remains is to discuss the relationship of Marlowe's plays to the Tudor tradition and to one another

with respect to the anti-Catholic content and to explore what new directions in the interpretation of Marlowe's plays may be indicated by the emphasis on this polemical element in his plays.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE IMPLICATIONS OF MARLOWE'S ANTI-CATHOLICISM

Having established that there was an anti-Catholic tradition in the Tudor theatre, reflecting the anti-papal bias of contemporary English religion and politics, and that there was also an anti-Catholic bias discernible in the plays of Christopher Marlowe, we must ask, first, whether Marlowe actually belonged to this tradition, or was his evident anti-Catholicism either a personal preference, unconnected with any external theatrical convention, or a literary device by which Marlowe was able to criticize with impunity Christianity at large? Secondly, we must consider the question of whether the recognition of the anti-Catholic element in Marlowe's plays affects in any important way our understanding or interpretation of them.

In examining Marlowe's relation to the anti-Catholic theatrical tradition of the sixteenth century, I find that the evidence suggests that Marlowe's anti-Catholicism may have been both conventional and personal in nature. Everything in his personal background,

including his family history, the social environment in which he grew up and the kind of education he is likely to have received, must have impressed him deeply with the official Tudor attitude toward the Church of Rome. Born in 1564, Marlowe reached the traditional "age of reason" in 1571, the year after the papal bull was issued which excommunicated Queen Elizabeth, and grew to maturity between the excommunication and the defeat of the Spanish Armada, a time of intense persecution of Catholics in England, when many anti-Catholic laws were passed and enforced, and when numerous anti-Catholic books, pamphlets, ballads and plays were produced. Judging by the evidence of the large number of printed sources for his plays, Marlowe read widely and retained much of what he read; having, in all likelihood, few contemporary books available to him which did not preach, in one way or another, the official Tudor attitude to Roman Catholicism, Marlowe can be presumed to have absorbed much of the Protestant view of the contention between the two great bodies of Christian thought. In short, living and maturing in Canterbury and Cambridge, Marlowe can scarcely have avoided being indoctrinated to the accepted Elizabethan attitude toward the Church of Rome.

When he came to write for the London theatres, Marlowe must have tried to write plays which would have been saleable to the general public, as well as artistically

satisfying to himself. The likelihood is that he must have tried, if not actually to imitate those plays which were currently in favor with the public, to interpolate into the plays that he wished to write the elements of the popular drama wherever this could be done conveniently. Given Marlowe's background and education, it must have been easy for him to insert into his own plays the anti-Catholic bias that was found in many plays of the 1580's and which had formed a staple element of Tudor drama for many years. A comparison of his plays with the printed works, both dramatic and non-dramatic, that were available to Marlowe as sources and models and with the plays which had been produced in England since the Reformation will show that he moulded his own plays according to the dramatic conventions of the Tudor anti-Catholic theatre.

Before discussing the similarities between Marlowe's plays and the polemical drama of his time, however, it will be useful to discuss two of the major dissimilarities: Marlowe's use of the names of real persons and the use of oaths in the polemical drama.

As much as any other playwright of the period, Marlowe frequently used the names of real, sometimes living, persons for characters and references in his plays. As we have seen, in The Massacre at Paris his characters are for the most part actual persons, some of them still alive when

the play was performed. In Doctor Faustus we find references to the King of Spain, the context clearly indicating that Marlowe is referring to Philip II, and to the Prince of Parma. The prologue to The Jew of Malta invokes the names of Guise and Borgia, while the King of Spain is mentioned in the body of the play, again probably referring to Philip II. A leading character in that play is Ferneze, whose name, as we have seen, is probably a corruption of Farnese, the family name both of Pope Paul III and of the Prince of Parma.<sup>1</sup>

Marlowe's references to real persons reflects the elation which overtook England after the defeat of the Armada. With Spanish sea power destroyed, a Protestant king on the throne of France,<sup>2</sup> and the danger of foreign invasion minimized, English Protestants were confident about their position both in England and the world and seem to have felt, as the major military and commercial power at sea, that their authors and playwrights could say anything

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<sup>1</sup>Perhaps it should be noted that Marlowe seems to have been the first, though not the last, dramatist to use the name "Ferneze." Other examples can be found in Ben Jonson's The Case Is Altered (pub. 1609), in which "Ferneze" is the name of several of the principal characters, and in John Marston's The Malcontent (1604), in which "Ferneze" is the name of a young man in love with the Duchess.

<sup>2</sup>Ironically, Marlowe's Protestant hero in The Massacre at Paris, Henry of Navarre, for political reasons, partly in order that he might become Henry IV of France, was converted to Catholicism in July, 1593. J. E. Neale, The Age of Catherine de Medici and Essays in Elizabethan History (London, 1963), p. 85.

about anyone in the world with impunity. We have already seen as examples of this national spirit the rather bullying tone of such works as Greene's Spanish Masquerado and Peele's A Farewell . . . to the famous and fortunate Generalls . . .. When Marlowe uses the names of real persons, especially of the well-known Catholics whom he casts as villains, he expresses England's post-Armada confidence and optimism. This should not be taken to suggest, however, that references to real or living persons were unknown in the theatre before the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Such references were not as common before the event as they were immediately after it. We have already seen, for instance, that Philip II of Spain was vexed by the fact that he was presented as the subject of scorn in English plays.<sup>3</sup> In general, however, most such references to prominent Catholic figures in pre-Marlovian Tudor drama were confined to oblique comment or to brief, barbed jibes which were inserted into plays as material incidental to the primary thrust of the action, such as the offhand comparison in Cambises of the titular tyrant of that play to Bishop Bonner (l. 1148). Marlowe, on the other hand, often placed his attacks on actual or recognizable representatives of Catholic figures at the center of his plays; this was possible for him, as it had not been for

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<sup>3</sup>Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, I, p. 323.

earlier playwrights, because he lived at a time when he was able to employ greater freedom than had perhaps ever before been available to an English playwright in attacking specifically and openly the political and religious enemies of English Protestantism.

Another difference between Marlowe and his predecessors lies in the dramatic use of supposedly Roman Catholic oaths on the stage. In my chapter on the anti-Catholic tradition in the Tudor theatre, I spoke of the use of swearing "Catholic" oaths to denote villainous or immoral characters. In comparing Marlowe to earlier Tudor playwrights, it must be admitted that there is remarkably little swearing of any sort in his plays. Ithamore occasionally uses an expression that might be considered "Catholic," as when he says, "Marry, euen he that strangled Bernardine . . ." (l. 2035); and Barabas once interjects an Italian obscenity, "Cazzo, Diabolo" (l. 1528), when he "smells" the two monks coming toward him, but this, in fact, is not strictly an oath at all. Considering Marlowe's reputation in private life for blasphemy and for deliberately shocking the pious, the absence of swearing in his plays may seem odd but may be explained in any of several ways. Marlowe's original text may have contained examples of the sort of oaths we have already discussed, and these may have been excised by a cautious theatre manager or printer as being too strong even to come from the mouths of Marlowe's

Catholics and other assorted "infidels." Another possibility is that Marlowe himself, writing for the commercial theatre, took care to keep his presumed blaspheming tendencies in check in order to produce plays that would be considered suitable for the public theatres. Finally, it is possible that the religious attitudes against this sort of characteristically "Catholic" swearing had become less severe in Marlowe's time and such oaths became more and more common in every day speech, with the result that there would have been no point in having Catholic characters using language commonly used by members of the public. In support of this last possibility, if we may judge by such works as the early plays of Ben Jonson, before the end of the 1590's it had become fashionable for young gallants to swear elaborate oaths which, by the standards of a generation or two before would have been considered blasphemous.<sup>4</sup> At any rate, however the fact may be explained,

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<sup>4</sup>As C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson point out in a note to their edition of Jonson's works, "The gallant" of Jonson's day "made a study of oaths." C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, eds., Ben Jonson (Oxford, 1927), IX, p. 355. We may note, for example, the care and attention Jonson's characters devote to their ornate profanity in Every Man in His Humour, where, in the 1601 printing, Cob admires his guest Bobadilla because "he doth sweare the best of any man christned: By Phoebus, By the life of Pharoah, By the body of me, As I am a gentleman, and a soldier: such daintie oathes . . ." (I.iii.74-77). In the revised version of this play, as published in 1616, the oaths have been changed slightly and "Phoebus" has been replaced by "St. George" and "the life of Pharaoh" by "the foot of Pharaoh . . ." (I.iv.83-84).

Marlowe's plays as we know them, contain no great amount of swearing, and there seems to be no reason to believe that Marlowe used oaths, as had his predecessors in the drama, to emphasize the "Catholicity" of any of his characters.

I think that there can be little doubt, however, that the presence of Catholic villains and conventional anti-Catholic low comedy in Marlowe's plays is the direct result of the time in which Marlowe lived and of his exposure to large quantities of anti-Catholic philosophy in his education and to many anti-Catholic polemics among the books and pamphlets that he certainly read and in the plays which he must have seen acted. The evidence of this influence can be seen in the uses that Marlowe made of his source materials and in similarities between his plays and others which preceded them on the English stage.

One of the more important sources for minor episodes and for some overall attitudes in Marlowe's plays is Foxe's Actes and Monuments. As we have seen, it is a possible source for Tamburlaine's mistreatment of Bajazet in the first part of Tamburlaine, for the Sigismund episode in the second part of Tamburlaine, and for the Saxon Bruno episode in the 1616 printing of Doctor Faustus. But Foxe's general outlook and philosophy can also be seen as providing the intellectual framework for The Massacre at

Paris, with its violent condemnation of the savagery of the Roman Catholic Church's persecutions of Protestants, and even, in part, for Edward the Second. It is clear that Marlowe must have at least dipped into the weighty Actes and Monuments and have retained vividly in his memory large parts of what he had read there. It is safe to say that Marlowe's attitude to the Roman Catholic Church, as evinced by his plays, could have come solely from John Foxe, even apart from whatever other authors he might have read.

Although there is no evidence that Marlowe ever actually read it, John Bale's The Pageant of Popes may be taken as representative of a kind of Protestant thinking which seems also to have had some influence on Marlowe's portrayal of Catholics in his plays. The emphasis upon the criminal and immoral behavior of the popes and cardinals in Bale's study and in similar works by Bale and by other authors is reflected in several of Marlowe's plays. The most obvious such reflection is perhaps the Prologue to The Jew of Malta, with its references to Machiavellians who aspire to "Peters chayre" (l. 12) and to poisonings; in The Pageant of Popes, most of the Popes are depicted as Machiavellians and a number of them are accused by Bale of having used poison to attain their ends. The portrayal of the Pope in the 1616 edition of Doctor

Faustus might also have been influenced by such works as The Pageant of Popes, where we find numerous condemnations of Popes who took a hand in secular politics and controlled, or tried to control, the affairs of secular monarchs. The same might be said of Marlowe's dramatic use of those Popes who do not actually appear on stage, but whose influence is felt strongly in Edward the Second and The Massacre at Paris.

The influence of the prose works of Foxe and Bale, and of their followers and imitators, is to be seen also in Marlowe's depiction of Roman Catholics as hypocrites, as in The Jew of Malta; as liars, as in Tamburlaine, part two, and The Jew of Malta; as persecutors of Protestants, as in The Massacre at Paris. This influence is also seen when Marlowe portrays popes and bishops meddling in secular politics and interfering with the rights of temporal kings, as in The Massacre at Paris, Doctor Faustus and Edward the Second. Indeed, there is nothing in Marlowe's portrayal of Roman Catholicism in his plays which either Bale or Foxe would have repudiated.

We can point to many analogies between the general anti-Catholicism of Tudor drama and that of Marlowe's plays, although we have no evidence of Marlowe's having directly imitated or used as a source any of the sixteenth century English plays which we have discussed. We may, however,

be justified in seeing Marlowe's plays as having been influenced not by any particular plays or playwrights, but by the general religious climate of the Tudor theatre. In amassing examples of anti-Catholicism in the plays of Marlowe's time and before, I have tried to establish only the existence and the flavor of the anti-papal climate of the age in which Marlowe's plays were written and staged. Without arguing for the direct influence of any of the plays discussed, we may take notice of some specific examples of similarities between the general expressions of anti-Catholicism in the Tudor theatre and the plays of Christopher Marlowe.

For example, there are many analogues in the earlier Tudor drama to some of the individual episodes and characterizations in The Massacre at Paris. One of the major themes in this play is the cruelty of Roman Catholics as persecutors of other religions. Quite apart from the use of this theme in the prose works of Foxe and Bale, we find earlier instances of this theme in such plays as New Custom, where, as we have seen, one of the important allegorical figures is Cruelty, whose function is to force adherence to the Catholic faith through violent means. In Cambises, as we have also seen, the Catholic Bishop Bonner's name is invoked as an example of a bloodthirsty tyrant comparable to King Cambises himself (ll. 1147-1150).

The Duke of Guise, in The Massacre at Paris, as we have seen, claims to have a "dispensation" from the Pope to do whatever he sees fit in suppressing the Protestants (l. 120). Such a claim, which would have been regarded as superstition and blasphemy by the Protestant audience of Marlowe's day, might have suggested the papal pardons which had been treated scornfully in such earlier plays as John Bale's Three Laws, where indulgences and papal pardons were considered to be the inventions of the Pope, without any sound theological basis (Sig. E viii<sup>v</sup>), and New Custom, where they are described as being "flatt/ Against Goddes worde" (Sig. B ii<sup>r</sup>).

Finally, the fairly conventional closing speeches of The Massacre at Paris, where England is urged to arm herself against the Pope and his followers, echo many plays, including W. Wager's The Longer Thou Livest, The More Fool Thou Art, where Piety's final speech is a prayer asking for guidance for the Queen and Privy Council, with a wish that they might not only support the Gospel but also "root out Anti-Christ" (ll. 1977-1979). Similar thoughts are used to end the anonymous The Troublesome Reign of King John, where the Bastard urges England to resist not only the Pope but also Spain and France (Part Two, ll. 1195-1196). Yet another example of the anti-Catholic exhortation is seen in Greene's A Looking Glasse for London and England,

which ends with the prayer of Jonas for Queen Elizabeth's continuing resistance against "the stormes of Romish Antichrist" (ll. 2283-2284).

In Edward the Second, as I have said earlier, we may see a conscious reference to the same theme that was more fully exploited both in John Bale's King Johan and in The Troublesome Reign of King John, namely the independence of the secular monarch from the authority of the Pope, an idea which was of vital importance to the development of the English state in the sixteenth century. Another incident in the play which may be seen as analogous to an anti-Catholic episode in another play of the period is Gaveston's verbal assault upon the Bishop of Coventry, which is slightly reminiscent of the Duke of Gloucester's powerful threats against the Bishop of Winchester in the first part of Henry VI (I.iii.47-51).

Many individual elements of Doctor Faustus are similar to episodes from earlier Protestant plays. The appearance of Mephistophilis in the attire of "an old Franciscan Frier" (l. 260) belongs to a tradition established by John Bale, who has Satan appear in the garb of a monk in The Temptation of Our Lord (Sig. D iii<sup>v</sup>) and dresses Sodomy as a monk, Hypocrisy as a friar and Ambition as a bishop in The Three Laws (Sig. G i<sup>v</sup>). Another example of this sort of visual anti-Catholicism can be seen in Robert

Greene's Alphonsus, King of Aragon, where the demon Calchas appears "in a white surplice and a Cardinals Myter" (s.d. 869).

Marlowe's scornful treatment of dirges and decretals in Doctor Faustus belongs to a religious tradition which can also be traced back in the theatre as far as John Bale, who condemned both in The Three Laws (Sig. B vii<sup>r</sup> - Sig. B vii<sup>v</sup>). The idea of dirges for the souls in purgatory is also treated with disapproval in The Troublesome Reign of King John, where John scornfully describes the Pope as being busy with trentals, masses and dirges (Part One, ll. 1460-1464).

The Pope's talk of using his authority to control the Emperor in the 1616 edition of Doctor Faustus (ll. 928-946) mirrors the depictions of papal power over secular authorities in Bale's King Johan and The Troublesome Reign of King John, in both of which, as we have seen, this subject is a major theme. The same subject is touched upon in King Darius, where the Pope is described as having all other rulers bowing before him, none of them daring to oppose him (Sig. E i<sup>r</sup> - Sig. E i<sup>v</sup>).

Many episodes of The Jew of Malta can be seen to be similar to those of earlier plays. I have already suggested that the fickleness of Del Bosco can be seen as analogous to that of Sir Thomas Stukeley in The Battle of

Alcazar. Similarly, the general hypocrisy and avarice of the Christians may be seen as having their roots in the allegorical Catholic figures of Hypocrisy and Covetousness in Bale's Three Laws and those of Hypocrisy and Avarice in New Custom; although such allegory is universal, in The Three Laws, New Custom and other Protestant morality plays of the sixteenth century these vices are always identified as Catholics, just as the Roman Catholics in The Jew of Malta are identified as hypocritical and avaricious. We can also see a similarity between the hypocritical clergymen in The Jew of Malta and those in Bale's John Baptist's Preaching in the Wilderness.

We need not look far for examples in the anti-Catholic Tudor drama of the attribution of lechery to monks and nuns such as we have found in The Jew of Malta. In The Cobler's Prophecy (l. 645) and in Lewis Wager's The Life and Repentance of Mary Magdalene (Sig. C iii<sup>r</sup>), we find references to lustful monks, friars and nuns. In Misogonus, we see the priest, Sir John, going off with the prostitute Melissa Meritrix.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the most entertaining theatrical presentation of this subject is that in The Troublesome Reign of King John, when the Bastard and his followers, on sacking a monastery, find that the monks are harboring beautiful "nuns" (Part One, ll. 1181-1279).

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<sup>5</sup>Farmer, Six Anonymous Plays, Second Series, p. 191.

Marlowe's depiction of Roman Catholic religious practices in The Jew of Malta may also be seen as part of the anti-Catholic tradition of Tudor England. The abuse of auricular confession, for instance, may remind us, however slightly, of the treatment of this sacrament in Peele's Edward I where the King disguises himself as a monk in order to hear the Queen's confession, only to be discomfited at what he learns. The scorn suggested by Ithamore's comic description of the vicious practical joke he played on a group of pilgrims (ll. 973-977) has its foundation in the Protestant theatrical tradition and may remind us of Bale's denunciation of pilgrimages as the snares of the devil in The Three Laws (Sig. D ii<sup>v</sup> - Sig. D iii<sup>r</sup>) and of the comic approval of pilgrimages by the vice, Nichol Newfangle, in Like Will to Like.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps one of the most interesting analogies to be made between The Jew of Malta and any earlier play not written by Marlowe is the similarity between this play and Robert Wilson's The Three Ladies of London. In both plays, a comparison is drawn between a Jew and a Catholic with the evident intention of demonstrating the moral superiority of the Jew. We have already seen that Ferneze, the Catholic governor of Malta, is a more ruthless and more successfully

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<sup>6</sup>Farmer, Dramatic Writings of Fulwell, p. 7.

Machiavellian figure than is Barabas himself. In The Three Ladies of London, the Italian merchant, Mercadore, evidently a Catholic, is deeply in debt to the Jewish usurer, Gerontus. In order to avoid his debt, Mercadore decides to go to Turkey in order to become a Moslem and take advantage of a law which annuls the previous debts of new converts to Mohammedanism. Gerontus, shocked to learn that Mercadore would forsake his religious faith merely to avoid a debt, abandons his claim on the merchant in order that he should not be responsible for Mercadore's taking such a serious step. Even the Mohammedan judge is shown to be shocked at finding such goodness in a Jew and such double-dealing on one calling himself a Christian.<sup>7</sup>

It seems that Marlowe, like Wilson, set up his dramatic situation solely in order to make the point that a Jew could be more righteous than a Catholic. In neither case, it should be noted, does the author make any claim for the goodness of the Jews, even though they show both Barabas and Gerontus as having been victimized by the Catholics. Rather, both Marlowe and Wilson portray their Jews as relatively less Machiavellian than their Catholic antagonists.

In general, critics examining the plays of Marlowe

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<sup>7</sup>The relevant passages in Farmer's facsimile edition of The Three Ladies of London are the following: Sig. D iii<sup>v</sup> - Sig. D iv<sup>r</sup>; Sig. E iii<sup>r</sup>; and Sig. E iv<sup>v</sup> - Sig. F i<sup>v</sup>.

have tended to overlook the anti-Catholic element in them or to misconstrue its significance, taking Marlowe's anti-papal outbursts to be something which it is doubtful the audience for which Marlowe wrote his plays would have seen in them. Behind this misconstruction of the religious attitudes expressed in Marlowe's plays is the influence of the romantic movement on the study of his works. Between the death of Charles I and the romantic period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Marlowe's plays fell into a period of neglect in which they were hardly printed or acted on the stage. According to John Bakeless, Marlowe's name was "nearly forgotten by the middle of the seventeenth century,"<sup>8</sup> and was completely eclipsed in the eighteenth century,<sup>9</sup> a time when his greatest tragedy was widely known only through a burlesque version called Harlequin Dr. Faustus written in 1724 by John Thurmond.<sup>10</sup> But with the coming of the romantic movement in English literature, interest in Marlowe's plays was revived: in 1818, Edmond Kean played Barabas in a revival of The Jew

<sup>8</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, II, p. 272.

<sup>9</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, II, p. 143.

<sup>10</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, p. 303.

of Malta,<sup>11</sup> and an edition of the plays was published in several volumes between 1818 and 1820.<sup>12</sup> Marlowe's influence can be seen, according to Bakeless, in the works of such English Romantics as Keats, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Hood and, somewhat later, Swinburne,<sup>13</sup> as well as on the German poet and playwright Goethe.<sup>14</sup> Byron was accused of having modelled his Manfred on Doctor Faustus, although he defended himself by pleading ignorance of Marlowe's tragedy.<sup>15</sup> Yet Manfred, if not directly influenced by Marlowe, was in the Marlovian style, and Marlowe's plays, at least as they were perceived by the romantic poets, seemed to have a good deal in common with the spirit of the age, the mood that Mario Praz has called the "Romantic Agony." This being the case, the romantics revived Marlowe and placed him among the major English writers.

Thus, the modern consciousness of Christopher Marlowe began with, and was filtered through, the philosophy and attitudes of the romantic period. This has created a

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<sup>11</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, p. 367.

<sup>12</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, II, pp. 307-308.

<sup>13</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, II, pp. 143-146.

<sup>14</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, pp. 316-318.

<sup>15</sup>Bakeless, Tragicall History of Christopher Marlowe, I, pp. 324-325.

habit of seeing Marlowe as a romantic poet and, as a result seeing in him primarily those qualities which the romantics emphasized in their own works as well as in Marlowe's: intellectual rebellion, philosophical meditation upon autobiographical themes, anti-clericalism and the worship of nature. In Marlowe criticism, at least in the first half of the twentieth century, the romantic approach to the plays of Marlowe has emphasized the identity of Marlowe and his leading characters, especially the Machiavellians such as Guise and Barabas, and has taken their atheism to be the poet's own.<sup>16</sup> Roy Battenhouse argues that romantic critics of Marlowe's plays "not only employ dramatic material unjustly, but they identify Marlowe with doctrines that were anathema to every Elizabethan moralist."<sup>17</sup>

In quoting Battenhouse on this point, and having referred above to the question of what the Elizabethan audience might have seen in Marlowe's plays, I must also refer to J. B. Steane's critique of Battenhouse's views of Tamburlaine;<sup>18</sup> according to Steane, one of the weaknesses

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<sup>16</sup>Roy Battenhouse complains of this tendency and details some of its inadequacies and misinterpretations resulting from it in the first chapter of his Marlowe's Tamburlaine, pp. 1-17. Battenhouse names F. S. Boas, John Ingram, Una Ellis-Fermor and Philip Henderson as examples of critics influenced by the romantic view of Marlowe.

<sup>17</sup>Battenhouse, Marlowe's Tamburlaine, p. 7.

<sup>18</sup>J. B. Steane, Marlowe, A Critical Study (Cambridge, 1964). Steane's principal criticisms of Battenhouse are found on pp. 71-77 and pp. 341-345.

of Battenhouse's approach to Marlowe lies in its assumption that Tamburlaine was intended to express the moral views of a monolithic "Elizabethan mind" or of a "typical" Elizabethan, an assumption which Steane believes is not justifiable.

Steane argues that Battenhouse's interpretation of Tamburlaine as a moralistic condemnation of ambition is not well founded because, according to Steane, it is based on the premise "that Marlowe wishes you to watch the play with a conventional mind because he is giving you something which will fortify you in your conventionality."<sup>19</sup> Yet we must bear in mind that the Tudor drama was carefully circumscribed in the areas of thought and subject matter on which it could dwell, as the imprisonment of some of those involved in the banned play, The Isle of Dogs, demonstrates.<sup>20</sup> Severe penalties could be meted out to authors or actors whose plays went far beyond the bounds of acceptably conventional political philosophy or religion.

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<sup>19</sup>Steane, Marlowe, A Critical Study, p. 73.

<sup>20</sup>This play, written evidently by Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson in 1597, was denounced as "a lewd plaie . . . contayninge very seditious and sclanderous matter." Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, IV, p. 323. Jonson and some of the actors who appeared in The Isle of Dogs spent some time in prison because of their roles in the affair. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, I, p. 299. The conventionality of thought in the Elizabethan theatre seems to be supported by David Bevington, who says that polemical drama under Queen Elizabeth "could speak of political matters such as the international menace of Catholicism, but had to be more discreet on doctrinal hairsplitting." Bevington, Tudor Drama and Politics, p. 128.

In his presentation of Roman Catholics in his plays, more than in any other subject matter, Marlowe was dealing in stage conventions, and, as Steane would have it, thereby reinforcing the members of the audience in their own conventionality. This being the case, we must see Marlowe's anti-Catholicism for what it is and avoid the pitfall of seeing it as a form of open rebellion against religious authority or as a rationalistic attack on Christianity itself. The explicit public expression of such views could have caused Marlowe to be imprisoned for heresy or even treason if the Elizabethan audience, including the theatre managers, the actors, the printers, the patron of the company or the members of the Privy Council, had seen his plays as expressing these opinions.

The only critic who has emphasized the anti-Catholic element in Marlowe's plays is Ranier Pineas, in his fine study of Tudor and Stuart Anti-Catholic Drama, who surveys the subject and finds that the anti-Catholic drama, which he sees as a nationalistic expression of Protestant England's growing independence from the intellectual and philosophical traditions of continental Europe, was a major influence on the development of the mainstream of Tudor and Stuart theatre, even on the plays of Shakespeare. Pineas sees Marlowe, in some of his plays, to be directly in the tradition of polemical drama,

perceiving not only The Massacre at Paris but also The Jew of Malta to be plays "of polemical significance."<sup>21</sup> Here, according to Pineas, the anti-Catholicism is "more sophisticated" than that of The Troublesome Reign of King John and earlier polemical plays in that The Jew of Malta "introduces the new element of an outside spectator and commentator" on the corruption of the Catholic clergy "in the person of the Jew Barabas. Since Barabas is not a Protestant, his strictures on Catholic Christianity have the advantage of ostensible impartiality, while at the same time making the implicit point that Catholicism gives all of Christianity a bad name."<sup>22</sup> He goes on to say that the argument of The Jew of Malta is "not that Barabas is no worse than the Catholics, but that Catholics and Jews have much in common."<sup>23</sup>

With regard to The Massacre at Paris, Pineas sees Navarre as playing a part similar to that of King John in Bale's King Johan and the anonymous Troublesome Reign of King John, and, at the same time, regards Navarre's flattering remarks about England and Elizabeth as having the same effect as what Pineas calls the "impartial source" that Barabas is said to play in The Jew of Malta, except that "this time the

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<sup>21</sup>Pineas, Tudor and Early Stuart Anti-Catholic Drama, p. 9.

<sup>22</sup>Pineas, Tudor and Early Stuart Anti-Catholic Drama, p. 9.

<sup>23</sup>Pineas, Tudor and Early Stuart Anti-Catholic Drama, p. 9.

source is flattering rather than critical."<sup>24</sup> Pineas also sees the Guise as a sophisticated development of the role of the Vice in the earlier morality plays, and shows that the Guise's admissions that "his Catholicism is hypocritical" and "a cover under which to achieve his secret ambition" is a polemical use of "the charge that Catholics were secretly atheists . . . ." <sup>25</sup> The origin of this charge, says Pineas, "is to be found in the classic assertion of the controversialist that his opponent knows he is wrong but is too dishonest to admit as much, a technique which is also the source of the self-condemnation device, probably the one most effective technique in polemical drama."<sup>26</sup>

I find it difficult to quarrel with any of the views or interpretations expressed by Pineas, although I would voice one qualification of his treatment of Marlowe's plays: in his study, Pineas concentrates largely on the explicitly polemical drama, and so dwells on only two of Marlowe's plays. I feel that this should not be taken to indicate that there are no anti-Catholic elements in Marlowe's other plays, but only that they are not, as Pineas finds

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<sup>24</sup>Pineas, Tudor and Early Stuart Anti-Catholic Drama, p. 9.

<sup>25</sup>Pineas, Tudor and Early Stuart Anti-Catholic Drama, p. 9.

<sup>26</sup>Pineas, Tudor and Early Stuart Anti-Catholic Drama, p. 10.

The Jew of Malta and The Massacre at Paris to be, primarily polemical in intention.

One of Pineas' statements which is most important for an evaluation of the role of anti-Catholicism in Marlowe's plays is his assertion that "it is quite clear that it is specifically Catholicism and not Christianity in general which is being satirized in The Jew of Malta."<sup>27</sup> I emphasize this because it is not unusual for critics to take Marlowe's attacks on Catholicism as criticism of the whole of Christianity. For example, Paul Kocher says that the religious satire of The Jew of Malta has been "cast in a specifically Catholic setting" in order to make it "digestible to Elizabethan playgoers," but that what is satirized in the play is "common to both Protestantism and Catholicism," so that "the satire flies beyond the immediate setting to strike all Christianity."<sup>28</sup> Frederick Boas holds that Marlowe was "hostile to all forms of institutional religion," and that in his plays he "pilloried and held up to scorn" equally the "followers of Christ, of Mahomet, and of Moses . . . . And as between Catholicism and Protestantism there seems little left to choose."<sup>29</sup>

Yet, as I have argued before, it can be equally

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<sup>27</sup>Pineas, Tudor and Early Stuart Anti-Catholic Drama, p. 9.

<sup>28</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 126.

<sup>29</sup>Boas, Christopher Marlowe, p. 260.

argued that no play as openly critical of Protestantism as Marlowe's are here taken to be could have been publicly acted or printed in the time of Queen Elizabeth I. As Willard Thorp says;

Marlowe . . . was particularly careful to make his dramas conform in all essentials to traditional ethical standards . . . . Reading more in the plays than they legitimately may and conjecturing on the still baffling facts of his life, commentators have built up a kind of Marlowe myth which probably has some fanciful truth as regards the man but which finds little support from a close scrutiny of the plays. If they really are as unqualifiedly atheistic and unmoral as some historians appear to believe, they could never have received acclaim at a time when the Elizabethan theatre was a genuinely popular institution.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, our examination of The Jew of Malta has shown that, given the setting of the play, the references to "Knights of Malta," the relationship between Malta and Spain and the surname of the Governor of the island, there is little or no basis for Kocher's assertion that, "Especially in the first part of the drama there is little to show that Malta is a Catholic community."<sup>31</sup> Tucker Brooke's suggestion, in his essay "Christopher Marlowe," that "prelatists and Puritans alike" might have denounced Marlowe as a libertine and atheist because of the logical attacks on Christians, such as that of Barabas, in his

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<sup>30</sup>Thorp, The Triumph of Realism in Elizabethan Drama, 1558-1612, p. 40.

<sup>31</sup>Kocher, Christopher Marlowe, p. 126.

plays, also seems to be weakened when once the strong anti-Catholicism of these plays is recognized.<sup>32</sup>

Marlowe's personal religious unorthodoxy, then, his alleged "atheism," for which, as we have already seen, there is a great amount of evidence, seems to be largely irrelevant to our understanding of his plays as public documents. Whatever may have been Marlowe's private views of Christianity as a whole, in his plays he voiced opinions which were evidently those most commonly held and which were closest to the official positions of the English church and state. Marlowe may well, as Richard Cholmeley asserted, have "read the atheist lecture" to Raleigh and his friends, but he did so in private, not from the stage of a public theatre where there were always those who were ready to denounce to the authorities any signs of religious or political unorthodoxy. In private, Marlowe may have explained to close friends that he intended his plays to be seen or read allegorically as denunciations of all Christians, but there is no evidence to support this supposition, and the plays themselves cannot easily be made to yield such an interpretation. We are left, then, with a conception of Marlowe as a complex figure who privately displayed a questioning, agnostic temperament while publicly courting the favor of the audiences in the popular theatres

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<sup>32</sup>C. F. Tucker Brooke, Essays on Shakespeare and Other Elizabethans (New York, 1948), p. 192.

with plays whose Protestant orthodoxy is difficult to question. But, given the fact that Marlowe has always seemed a shadowy, complicated person whose life seems to have been full of contradictions and inconsistencies, we should have no trouble in absorbing yet another complexity into our understanding of a man who was able to write not only a brutal play like The Massacre at Paris, but a spiritual tragedy of the depth and magnitude of Doctor Faustus.

The question remains as to whether an emphasis upon Marlowe's anti-Catholicism as a continuing theme in his plays will in any appreciable way alter our understanding or interpretation of them. By no means can recognition of the anti-papal element in Marlowe's works be considered a "key" to unlock any of the secrets of Marlowe's art, nor will it provide an answer to any of the biographical, philosophic or aesthetic questions which are often raised in studies of Marlowe. Yet I believe that the recognition of Marlowe's anti-Catholicism for what it is will better enable us to see the author within the perspective of his own time.

For one thing, the presence of the polemical element in most of Marlowe's plays demonstrates that he was indeed a commercial playwright with an eye on the likes and dislikes of his audience. A play such as The Massacre

at Paris was obviously written as a crowd pleaser and intended to pander not only to the mob's love of violent action, but also to its feverish hatred of Catholics. We may ask to what extent this aiming at the mass taste may have influenced Marlowe in his other plays. Could the sensational aspects of his other plays have been dictated by the desire to please the public taste for violence, bloodshed and racial and religious bigotry? Certainly this would explain the excessive violence of such plays as Tamburlaine and The Jew of Malta, as well as The Massacre at Paris. But it might also explain Marlowe's insertion of the Sigismund episode, essentially a digression, into the second part of Tamburlaine; we may assume that Marlowe needed an episode to stretch the Tamburlaine story sufficiently to fill a second play and that he chose the story of Sigismund for its popular appeal because of its inherent violence and its condemnation of a Roman Catholic emperor. In short, Marlowe seems deliberately to have appealed to the mass audience by offering it the Roman Catholic villains which it "loved to hate," such as the Guise and Sigismund.

But more than this, Marlowe seems to have used the popular appeal of the anti-Catholic theme as a means of creating sympathy for rather unlikable heroes to whom he was himself evidently attracted. The titular figure

of Edward the Second, for example, was an unpromising character around whom to build a lengthy tragedy; in the play he is weak, self-centered, probably homosexual and neglectful of his duties, placing his personal interests ahead of those of the state. To make Edward into a character with whom the audience could identify emotionally, at least for the first part of the play, before Edward becomes a victim of the circumstance he has helped to create and, therefore, more naturally sympathetic in his sufferings, Marlowe establishes a dramatic situation in which, at least in appearance, the struggle is not between the weaknesses of an individual king and the Tudor ideal of kingship, but between the ideal of royal sovereignty, even where the monarch is plainly weak, and the authority of the Church of Rome. Marlowe therefore took advantage of the fact that the sympathies of his audience were generally against papal authority, and, in the first act of Edward the Second, cleverly arranged his plot materials to manipulate his audience in such a way that it found itself, almost against what might otherwise have been its instinct, wishing for Edward's success in his struggle with the nobility who were supported by Rome.

In the same way Marlowe manipulated his audience's instinctive feelings in Doctor Faustus to make the spectators involve themselves emotionally with his tragic

hero. Faustus cannot have been an especially appealing figure to Marlowe's audience in the public theatre. Unlike the typical heroes of the contemporary theatre, Faustus was not a soldier nor a king nor a lover, but a scholar and an intellectual, a figure who can have been neither very familiar nor very attractive to a largely illiterate audience who loved to see men of action in their plays. Moreover, Faustus is shown at the beginning of the play to be something of an "ivory tower" figure, full of self-satisfaction, if not overweening pride, at his own accomplishments and scholarly achievements; he also rejects religion and seeks godlike powers through dealing with the devil. As basic material, Doctor Faustus obviously might have had great potential for melodramatic action and spectacle, but Marlowe wished to write not just a "thriller" but a tragedy, and to do so he had to find a means of making his spectators sympathize with his hero, to make them care enough about Faustus to involve themselves emotionally with him and share his sufferings, in spite of his scholarly status, his pride and his diabolism. One of the steps that Marlowe took to accomplish this interest in and emotional involvement with Faustus was to make him also an anti-Catholic hero. Thus, early in the play we hear Faustus' resolution to drive away the Prince of Parma and Valdes' jibe against the King of Spain, with which Faustus voices agreement. Having

established the anti-Catholic credentials of his hero, Marlowe has given his audience cause to identify with Faustus almost at the very beginning of the play; later, to be certain of maintaining this empathy between hero and audience, Marlowe presents the scenes of Faustus' visit to Rome. As in Edward the Second, the anti-Catholicism of Doctor Faustus is functional in that it both pleases the popular audience and establishes a rapport between a potentially unattractive hero and the public.

The same can be said of The Jew of Malta, where Barabas, a potentially highly unsympathetic character, is established as the central figure of the play in contention with a Roman Catholic society led by Ferneze, the Governor of Malta. The fact that from the beginning of the play the action takes place in a Catholic setting must have made it easy for the audience to take the side of Barabas, however unpalatable he might have seemed if the play had been set in a Protestant environment. Although a Jew, a poisoner, a murderer and an intriguer, Barabas was probably a sympathetic enough figure to have Marlowe's audience cheering for him as he systematically murdered a number of Maltese Catholics, most of his victims being, after all, nuns and monks.

The anti-Catholicism of The Jew of Malta, however, may make the play's interpretation even more difficult,

rather than helping to clarify our understanding. Especially problematic is the question of to what dramatic category the play belongs. It is doubtful that it was ever considered a tragedy, in spite of the claim to that status of title page of the 1633 edition, unless the term "tragedy" be broadly interpreted as simply a play in which the central character dies at the end. But in Marlowe's time, something more than the death of the hero was evidently expected in a tragedy. In Doctor Faustus, The Spanish Tragedy or Titus Andronicus, all conceivably written and first performed within a year or so of The Jew of Malta, suffering and nobility of spirit were associated with the hero's death and seemed to have been considered important parts of the tragic element in these plays. It is difficult to see much nobility of spirit in The Jew of Malta, and Barabas' sufferings are primarily associated with his financial worries; the meanness of spirit of Barabas, opposed to the hypocritical villainy of his Roman Catholic antagonists, contribute to making The Jew of Malta seem rather to be a serious melodrama, containing some of the elements of farce in the tricks which Barabas plays upon other characters, in which a large number of characters, including the titular hero, die gruesomely; in short, The Jew of Malta has much in common with modern "black comedy" and the "theatre of the absurd." We may wonder whether the chief

appeal of this play to the Elizabethan audience was not its similarity to one of the theatre's principal competitors for the public's attention, the cock-fights. An analogy between cock-fighting and the action of The Jew of Malta is not so very far-fetched. In both, leaving aside the issue of cash wagers on the outcome of a cock-fight, the chief interest is in the battle to the death between two equally-matched, ruthless opponents, for neither of whom would there be much reason for personal sympathy among the spectators. Marlowe's audience may well have looked upon the struggle between Barabas and Ferneze as they did battles between fighting cocks, as an amusing struggle between two equally inhuman combatants, with popular opinion perhaps favoring Barabas, not only because he is the more charming and less morally and politically objectionable of the two, but also because he is opposed by a ruthless and hypocritical Roman Catholic.

If The Jew of Malta is then a seriocomic melodrama in which the author presents a struggle between two evil forces nearly equal in strength, with a morally ambiguous outcome, it is not the only play of this kind dating from roughly the Elizabethan period. In many ways, The Jew of Malta is similar to Ben Jonson's The Alchemist. In both plays, society is depicted as being moved primarily by consideration of financial gain. In each, the central

action revolves around attempts of various morally dubious characters to manipulate and deceive other morally doubtful persons into positions that will put the plotters into positions that will give them greater wealth or power. In each, finally, there is a morally ambiguous ending: Barabas dies in his own trap, leaving the Machiavellian Ferneze in power; the Alchemist and his confederates lose the fruits of their confidence tricks, although their victims suffer also, the owner of the house used by the tricksters being the undeserving beneficiary of all their plots. In some ways, then, The Jew of Malta may be closer to the satire of Jonson than to the other tragedies of Marlowe.

If the victory of the Catholics in The Jew of Malta seems to be an unlikely outcome in the anti-papal framework that I have described in Marlowe's theatre, there are circumstances in the play which may diminish the apparent triumph of the Catholics at the end of the play. For we must remember that Ferneze's victory may be only a Pyrric one; Del Bosco had announced near the beginning of the play that the King of Spain intended to expel Ferneze and his knights from the island. Del Bosco's warning would probably have been remembered by Marlowe's audience, especially as it was this information that prompted Ferneze to repudiate his pact with the Turks, ultimately bringing about all the reversals of fortune that followed that action. Thus,

although Ferneze, at the end of the play, is temporarily victorious, the suggestion has been made in the play that he is also to be punished by the loss of his power over Malta. The Elizabethan audience may possibly have seen in this final irony the moral that all of Ferneze's Machiavellian policy has won him nothing.

In examining Marlowe's plays from the point of view of their having been written within the Tudor anti-Catholic polemical tradition, I have had to emphasize one aspect of these plays, and that a negative and somewhat unpleasant one, to the almost total exclusion of the other qualities of these plays. Marlowe's works were successful on the stage in their own time partly because of their anti-Catholic content and partly because of their excellence as a drama; in our day they continue to thrill audiences not because of their anti-Catholicism but because of their grand, rhetorical speeches, their colorful, exciting plots, their exotic settings and situations and, in the best of them, the powerful emotions and moving poetry which they contain.

Marlowe's plays, however, also contain a strong element of Elizabethan Protestant polemic. As I have shown, nearly every one of his plays contains some character, event or reference which would have been understood by the audience in Marlowe's theatre as an attack upon the Roman Catholic Church. Because of the conscious anti-Catholicism

in his plays, Marlowe, like most of the playwrights of his generation, may rightly be counted as a practitioner of the tradition of theatrical anti-Catholic polemic which began with the plays of John Bale and continued throughout the Tudor era, except, of course, during the time of Queen Mary. By seeing Marlowe as adhering to this convention we may perhaps gain a greater understanding of his plays, even though, in accepting this insight, we may perceive an apparent conflict between Marlowe's treatment of the Church of Rome in his plays and his private statements on religion. In the long run, however, we must deal with Marlowe's public utterances rather than his private opinions, for his public expression is so much more eloquent and coherent than is the little that was whispered after his death about his private thoughts. In stressing the anti-Catholic theme in his plays, I hope that I have succeeded in laying emphasis upon an important aspect of the public face of Christopher Marlowe, that facet of his personality which, after all, he himself chose to display to the world.

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