

Elizabeth I and The Anglican Settlement

After the extremes of the two previous reigns - Mary (Catholic) and Edward VI (Protestant)

Elizabeth deliberately tried to follow a **middle way** between the two beliefs. The Catholics wanted nothing short of the total restoration of Roman Catholicism in England, whereas Protestants wanted revenge for the persecutions that had taken place during Mary's reign (Marian Persecutions).

THE ANGLICAN SETTLEMENT - THE MIDDLE WAY	
Action taken to please Catholics	Action taken to please Protestants
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bishops to remain in charge of running the Church 2. The same churches were to be used as before. 3. Services were to remain similar to the old style Catholic ones. 4. The New Prayer Book was changed slightly. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cranmer's Prayer Book was re-issued. 2. There were to be no reopening of monasteries. 3. There were to be no relics or shrines. 4. There was to be less decoration in the churches. 5. The English Bible was to be read in church. 6. The Pope was not to be the head of the Church of England.

These changes were brought about by two Acts of Parliament in **1559**.

1. **Act of Supremacy** - Elizabeth became **Supreme Governor** (instead of Supreme Head) of the Church of England. Priests and men proceeding to university degrees were required to swear an oath to the royal supremacy or lose their positions.
2. **Act of Uniformity** - Cranmer's Prayer Book was altered slightly, but it had to be used in every church. There was to be a fine of 1 shilling (£6 today) for anyone refusing to go to church.

This settlement remains today, virtually unchanged. As Elizabeth had hoped, many Catholics accepted Elizabeth's 'Middle Way'. Many of the nobles and gentry, along with a majority of the common people, remained loyal to the old faith, but all the key positions in the government and church were held by Protestants. These Protestants employed patronage, pressure, and propaganda, as well as threats, to secure an outward observance of the religious settlement. Elizabeth, moreover, had no interest in probing the inward convictions of her subjects ("I do not wish to make a window on mens' souls."); provided that she could obtain public support and obedience, she was willing to let the private beliefs of the heart remain hidden.

However, the Spanish and Papal influence stirred up opposition to her (Papal Bull 1570, Mary Queen of Scots, Armada) so that later in her reign she was forced to be much tougher against more fanatical, hard line Catholics.

In 1563, the Convocation of Clergy issued the **Thirty-Nine Articles**, summarising the dogmas of the Anglican Church. These included declarations that the 'Bishop of Rome hath no jurisdiction in this Realm of England' and that Masses offered for the souls of the living and dead were 'blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits.'

A first offence against the **Act of Supremacy** could mean loss of all goods and movable possessions. A second offence could result in life imprisonment and loss of all real estate. A third offence was regarded as high treason and could carry the death penalty.

The **Act of Uniformity**, introduced heavy penalties for those who refused to conform to Elizabeth's Church. Failure to attend the new Sunday service could attract a fine of one shilling (= £6 today). This was two or three days pay for many of the Queen's lowlier subjects. An alternative punishment was excommunication from the Church of England.

Attending the Catholic Mass could attract colossal fines of 100 marks for the first offence (= £8,250 today). A second offence quadrupled the fine. Offending a third time could mean life imprisonment and the loss of all goods. The same punishments were threatened against those who criticised the Book of Common Prayer. Anyone assisting at Mass was liable to six months imprisonment for the first offence, a year for the second, and life for the third.