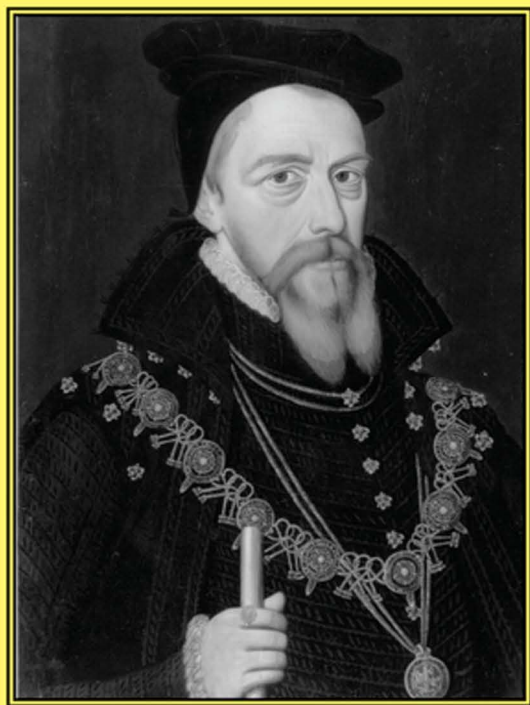




ST ANDREWS STUDIES IN
REFORMATION HISTORY



William Cecil *and* Episcopacy, 1559–1577



Brett Usher

William Cecil and Episcopacy,
1559–1577

For Harriet, Katherine
and (especially) Carolynn

William Cecil and Episcopacy, 1559–1577

BRETT USHER

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Preface and acknowledgements

Few books, perhaps, owe their origin to a decision by the author's wife to modernize the family bathrooms.

During 1993 and 1994 I had begun assembling material for a study of John Aylmer, bishop of London (1577–94), and had reached the point of sketching his early life and his first eighteen years as an Elizabethan churchman. One piece of the jigsaw, however, was missing. Why did this important protégé of the Grey/Dudley network under Edward VI fail to capture a bishopric – any bishopric – until almost the middle of Elizabeth's reign?

With plumbers, carpenters and decorators imminent, I was destined to be confined to the house for three weeks and knew from previous experience that I could hardly expect an uninterrupted existence, even if I firmly closed the door of my study. I would be called upon to peer into yawning gaps in the floorboards, make instant decisions on the position of piping, discuss with the carpenter how to translate plans into practice. Serious, concentrated work was going to be impossible. I therefore decided to undertake a straightforward, forensic exercise which could be taken up and put down at will amid the infernal hammering.

How exactly had the first Elizabethan bench come into being? Was there some hidden trail of policy which would explain why Aylmer failed to become a member of it? I set about the task by making notes from all the traditional sources on the earlier careers of those who reached, or were considered for, the episcopal bench in the years 1559–62. What emerged by midsummer (apart from new bathrooms) was an extended essay of over 20 000 words – essentially, an early draft of the first six chapters of the present book. David Loades kindly agreed to read it, did so with admirable promptness and made many valuable suggestions. Subsequently both Felicity Heal and Andrew Pettegree also gave it their approbation and encouraged me to publish it. Its awkward size, however, posed a problem. At over twice the length of the average article to be found in learned journals, it was still far too short for a monograph. Eventually I sent it to the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* to see whether it might be published in two parts. Diarmaid MacCulloch, newly appointed one of *JEH*'s joint editors, devoted his attention to this monster well beyond the call of duty and opened up several fruitful avenues of further research. He strongly urged, however, that to cut or divide it would be to blunt the force of its necessarily

allusive arguments and that it should instead be expanded in some way into a short monograph. I did not take his immediate advice – to incorporate it into a fully fledged re-examination of the Elizabethan Settlement – because I felt insufficiently qualified for the task. Something more to do with Men than with Movements was required and I therefore decided to continue investigating the processes by which the bench was replenished, following death or translation, during the next forty years.

Numerous cans of worms were accordingly opened and it soon became apparent that to attempt the whole study as a single volume would, given the exigencies of modern publishing, be an impossibility. Andrew Pettegree, who had kindly asked for first refusal of it as a possible addition to *Studies in Reformation History*, firmly insisted that there must be two, slimmer, volumes. Thus, *William Cecil and Episcopacy* will, I hope, soon be followed by *Lord Burghley and Episcopacy, 1577–1598*.

No history book can hope to be definitive and a study of this kind falls into a different category altogether. Given the highly allusive nature of the evidence, the argument must proceed by inference and juxtaposition of facts which may or may not prove to be vitally connected. It must also be constructed on underlying assumptions which other historians might at once choose to rule out of court. My own are that William Cecil spent much of his official life under Elizabeth trying to do his best for the episcopal bench, almost invariably got his way with the queen, and was very much a ‘church puritan’ in the sense that his aims were at first reformist and ecumenical (in the Protestant sense of the word) and, as the arteries of the English Church appeared to be hardening after 1575, threw his weight behind the tradition of evangelical churchmanship which would not close the door upon continued communion with the continental reformed churches. The backbone of the study, however, is a constant engagement with the bishops’ official relationship with the court of exchequer, and my findings are summarized in the appendices. As my footnotes reflect, these have profited from the considerable body of original work on ecclesiastical finance and administration which was undertaken, in the wake of Christopher Hill’s trail-blazing (if in many ways irresponsible) *Economic Problems of the Church*,¹ by a rising generation of historians dedicated to a full *explication* of the 1559 settlement. There has, however, been a marked decline in this area of research since the mid-1980s, despite the fact that much uncharted territory within the surviving exchequer records awaits scholarly

¹ Christopher Hill, *Economic Problems of the Church from Archbishop Whitgift to the Long Parliament* (Oxford, 1956).

attention. What follows is therefore very much an interim account and I can only echo Patrick Collinson's modest hope in launching his (considerably more definitive) *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, that this 'necessarily general survey' will help to stimulate further studies which will 'certainly correct some of the unguarded generalizations of my own work'.² It is, in sum, a Tay Bridge of a book, a series of flimsy girders flung across a raging torrent of evidential matter, and designed to withstand a force 5 gale: some young whipper-snapper will soon come tearing along at force 10 and wreck it entirely, carrying into the river its author and the one hundred episcopal passengers which it hopes to sneak across from the southern bank of Hypothesis to the northern bank of Established Fact. But perhaps not all of them will drown and not a few struggle to the farther shore. On the day of judgement I would be prepared to stand by my analysis of the processes which led to the creation of Elizabeth's original bench³ and would take a modest bet on my interpretation of events between 1570 and 1575.

Thereafter, however, an ever-mushrooming body of recorded evidence makes any analysis of episcopal fortunes in some vital respects a matter of personal selection. In their generation both Christopher Hill and Lawrence Stone adopted a negative – not to say frequently slick and cynical – approach. I have by contrast chosen to emphasize what was positive because, tucked away behind the scenes, there are motives which do not depend on the granting of leases by frightened prelates, promotions which owed nothing to the demands of rapacious courtiers, judicious and statesmanlike decisions where financial considerations did not remotely enter the equation.

Why has no such study been undertaken before? The process by which Elizabethan clerics were selected for the episcopal bench has always intrigued ecclesiastical historians but on the whole they have thrown up their hands and declared that the evidence is too scanty to allow of systematic investigation. Most of the vital decisions were taken behind closed doors and the processes of consultation which led to them were seldom committed to paper. Historians have therefore tended to shy away from committing themselves to unequivocal statements about that most crucial element in the equation, court patronage. At the same time, they

² Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London, 1967), p. 15.

³ Here I must enter an apology to Dr J.A. Vage. The manuscript of this book had been with the publishers for months before I was alerted to the existence of his article, 'Two lists of prospective bishops, 1559', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 8 (1987), pp. 192–8. I find that, by a similar forensic route, Dr Vage reached identical conclusions about the dating of the two documents which in Chapter One are described as 'the July List' and 'the October List'.

have, I believe, overlooked a number of ‘hidden agendas’ about the nature of episcopal promotions which are embedded in the exchequer records. What follows is therefore an attempt to splice together the surviving evidence from those records, from numerous state papers, and from other contemporary correspondence and memoranda, without straining credulity or going beyond the bounds of reasonable hypothesis.

Such a study, which attempts to examine the careers and credentials of about 200 Elizabethan clerics, would be impossibly overloaded with footnotes if it quoted chapter and verse for every biographical fact. Underlying the text, therefore, is the old *Dictionary of National Biography* and its forthcoming successor (for which, as an Associate Editor, my brief was to oversee the entries for the Elizabethan hierarchy), as well as the usual sources for a man’s university career.⁴ F.O. White’s *Lives of the Elizabethan Bishops of the Anglican Church* (London, 1898), a collection of short studies which is by turns startlingly thorough and wilfully capricious, often remains a vital backstop. C.H. Garrett’s *The Marian Exiles* (Cambridge, 1938) enshrines much previously undocumented material for an understanding of the early careers of Elizabeth’s first generation of bishops and not a few of their successors. *The Handbook of British Chronology* (3rd edn, London, 1985), originally compiled under the auspices of Sir Maurice Powicke and E.B. Fryde during the 1930s, remains an indispensable work of reference but continues to perpetuate a number of chronological errors.

II

The publication of a first book provides a welcome opportunity for discharging in print some long-standing scholarly debts. The most long-standing of all is to Dr Harry Culverwell Porter. During my undergraduate years in Cambridge in the late 1960s he was an inspiration and, for his wonderfully uncluttered and frequently witty exposition of complex issues, he remains for me a model of clarity whose methodology I have always tried to emulate.⁵

As a professional actor since graduating in 1968, I had many opportunities to continue my interest in the Elizabethan church. Working regularly in cities like Exeter, Leeds and York meant that I could use my leisure time to make use of their university libraries and I

⁴ In particular, J. and J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses, Part I (to 1751)*, 4 vols (Cambridge, 1922–27); and J. Forster, *Alumni Oxonienses, 1500–1714*, 4 vols (Oxford, 1891–92).

⁵ See H.C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1958).

gradually amassed a considerable body of material. But I was ploughing a lonely furrow and in 1985 my wife encouraged me to make contact with other practitioners in the field by joining the Ecclesiastical History Society. My 'initiation' was the Winter Meeting of 1986, conducted under the presidency of Sir Owen Chadwick. During the first coffee break, seeing me standing alone, Sir Owen approached me and courteously assumed that I must be a new member. I admitted that I was. Was there anyone in particular to whom I should like to be introduced? I said that I believed that the group chatting nearby included Patrick Collinson, Claire Cross and David Loades. 'Come along' said Sir Owen ...

Since that time I have received nothing but kindness and encouragement from that particular multitude of true professors and from many others besides – Margaret Aston, Eamonn Duffy and Bill Sheils spring to mind at once – as well as from the Society's hard-working officers such as Kathryn Harris and Michael Kennedy and its two most recent Hon. Editors, Diana Wood and Robert Swanson, responsible between them for seeing into print three of my published articles. The good offices of Diarmaid MacCulloch, who has had editorial responsibility for two further articles, have already been mentioned.

Following the inauguration in 1993 of the British Academy John Foxe Project, under the auspices of David Loades, I gave a paper at the first John Foxe Colloquium (Magdalene College, Cambridge, 1995) and it was there that I first met Andrew Pettegree and Tom Betteridge and turned an acquaintanceship with Thomas Freeman into what has become a close working relationship in several fields of mutual interest. Since 1997 regular attendance at the Tuesday seminar at the Institute of Historical Research, 'The religious history of Britain from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries', inaugurated by Nicholas Tyacke, Kenneth Fincham and Susan Hardman Moore, has added to my stock of wisdom and I owe especial thanks to all of them. In 1998 Felicity Heal invited me to become an Associate Editor for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, a rewarding if lengthy task, now finally discharged.

In 1999 Christopher Durston most generously invited me to become a Research Fellow at St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, a post which I held until 2002. I was most enthusiastically welcomed there not only by Chris but also by all his colleagues, including Maria Dowling, Susan Doran, Michael Partridge, Michael Questier and Glenn Richardson – a remarkable team by any standards. But all good things come to an end. In September 2002, under the good auspices of Stephen Taylor and Ralph Houlbrooke, I was appointed Visiting Research Fellow in the University of Reading. Since the spring of 2000 I have also profited from

constant contact with Patrick Collinson and John Craig, during our efforts as joint editors to produce the tenth-anniversary volume for the Church of England Record Society.⁶ As Hon. General Editor of the Society, Stephen Taylor has taken an unflagging interest in the volume and the finished product has benefited immensely from his expertise.

The beginning and end of my debts are to my wife, who encouraged me to join the Ecclesiastical History Society in the first place, and has lived patiently with my animadversions and writings about cartloads of obscure bishops, deans and other upwardly mobile divines, not to mention my frequent tirades against inadequate contributions to *Oxford DNB*. This final distillation of nine years' work therefore goes to her not only with my love but also in the hope that it justifies her original (and, at that point, quite speculative) assumption that I had something to contribute to Elizabethan studies.

Brett Usher
London 2003

⁶ Patrick Collinson, John Craig and Brett Usher (eds), *Conferences and Combination Lectures in the Elizabethan church: Dedham and Bury St Edmunds 1582–90* (Woodbridge, 2003).

Abbreviations

Place of publication is London unless otherwise stated.

APC	<i>Acts of the Privy Council of England</i> , ed. J.R. Dasent (1890–1907)
<i>Ath. Cant.</i>	<i>Athenae Cantabrigienses</i> , ed. C.H. and T. Cooper (3 vols, Cambridge, 1858–1913)
Bentham, <i>Letter Book</i>	‘The Letter-Book of Thomas Bentham, bishop of Coventy and Lichfield, 1560–1561’, ed. Rosemary O’Day and Joel Berlatsky (Camden Miscellany XVII, Camden Society 4th series, 22, 1979)
BIHR	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research</i>
BL	British Library, London
Cart. misc.	LPL, <i>Carte antique et miscellaneae</i>
CCCC	Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
CLRO	Corporation of London Record Office
Collinson, <i>Grindal</i>	Patrick Collinson, <i>Archbishop Grindal, 1519–1583. The struggle for a reformed church</i> (1979)
Collinson, <i>Thomas Wood</i>	Patrick Collinson (ed.), <i>Letters of Thomas Wood, Puritan, 1566–1577</i> (BIHR special supplement no. 5, November 1960)
CPR	<i>Calendars of the Patent Rolls</i>
CSP	<i>Calendars of State Papers</i>
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i>
DWL	Dr Williams’s Library, London
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>Fasti</i>	Joyce M. Horn et al. (eds), <i>John Le Neve: fasti ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1541–1857</i> (in progress since 1969)
GL	Guildhall Library, London

<i>Grindal Remains</i>	<i>The Remains of Edmund Grindal</i> , ed. William Nicholson (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1843)
Hasler, <i>H of C</i>	P.W. Hasler, <i>The House of Commons 1558–1603</i> (3 vols, 1981)
Heal, <i>PP</i>	Felicity Heal, <i>Of Prelates and Princes</i> (Cambridge, 1980)
Hennessy	George Hennessy, <i>Novum repertorium ecclesiasticum parochiale Londinense</i> (1908)
<i>HJ</i>	<i>Historical Journal</i>
<i>HMC</i>	Historical Manuscripts Commission
<i>HMCS</i>	HMC Salisbury MSS: calendar of Cecil MSS at Hatfield House
<i>Hutton Corr.</i>	<i>The Correspondence of Dr. Matthew Hutton</i> , ed. J. Raine, Surtees Society 17 (1843)
ITL	Inner Temple Library, London
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives [formerly Greater London Record Office]
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library, London
Machyn's Diary	<i>The Diary of Henry Machyn</i> , ed. J.G. Nichols, Camden Society, 42 (1859)
<i>OED</i>	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>Parker Corr.</i>	<i>The Correspondence of Matthew Parker</i> , ed. J. Bruce and T. Perowne (Cambridge, Parker Society, 1853)
PCC	Prerogative Court of Canterbury
PRO	Public Record Office, London (Kew)
<i>Reg. Parker</i>	<i>Registrum Matthei Parker diocesis Cantuariensis, A.D. 1559–1575</i> , ed. W.H. Frere (3 vols, Canterbury and York Society, 1928–33)
Rymer, XV, XVI	<i>Foedera . . .</i> , ed. Thomas Rymer and Robert Sanderson (20 vols, 1727–35)
SP	State Papers
Strype, <i>Annals</i>	John Strype, <i>Annals of the Reformation . . . in the Church of England</i> (7 vols in 4, 2nd edn, Oxford, 1820–40)
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>

<i>Valor</i>	<i>Valor Ecclesiasticus</i> , ed. J. Caley and J. Hunter, 6 vols (London, 1810–34)
VCH	<i>Victoria County Histories of England</i>
White, <i>Lives</i>	F.O. White, <i>The Lives of the Elizabethan Bishops of the Anglican Church</i> (1898)
ZL	<i>The Zurich Letters</i> , ed. Hastings Robinson (2 vols, Parker Society, Cambridge, 1842–45)



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Introduction

Historiographical debates

Though one of the principal themes in English history, the Elizabethan religious settlement is shrouded in mystery.

(J.E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments, 1559–1581*, London, 1953, p. 51)

And so it remains. It was once a commonplace of Elizabethan studies that, despite the strange obliquity of the parliamentary settlement of 1559, the new queen had little alternative but to throw in her lot with the returning Protestant exiles, her own conservative inclinations notwithstanding. Yet by the time that Sir John Neale came to crown a lifetime's distinguished research into Elizabethan politics by distilling it into a two-volume study of the parliaments which Elizabeth summoned with ever-increasing reluctance, he elected to throw that commonplace to the winds. Elizabeth was transformed from unwilling reformer into hardened reactionary: set on course for a disastrous collision with her chief advisers, clerical and lay, as her first parliament set about thrashing out a religious settlement acceptable to all parties, she was saved only at the eleventh hour by her own common sense and her consequent acceptance that a 'Protestant' polity, however loosely its terms might be construed, was an inevitable corollary of her own accession. Henceforth, however, she would exercise her Supremacy with extreme, even paranoid, vigilance in the maintenance of a conservative, Erastian status quo.¹

Whilst there is a great deal of truth in the latter proposition, it is now in its turn a commonplace that the first part of Neale's hypothesis has signally failed the test of time. By the end of the 1970s the whole of Sir John's grand edifice had come under attack from a new generation of historians – most notably N.L. Jones and W.S. Hudson – and a reactionary queen began to give way to a variety of other Elizabeths. None, however, steps unequivocally from the shadows. Closest to Neale's portrait stands Christopher Haigh's cautious realist, Protestant

¹ J.E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1559–1581* (London, 1953), pp. 51–84.

by inclination but above all a *politique* anxious to placate Catholic sensibilities.² Next in line comes Norman Jones's judicious stateswoman, steadily determined to return England to the Protestant fold, if on her own idiosyncratic terms.³ Well to the left is W.S. Hudson's forthright and convinced reformer, wedded to Protestantism through personal, emotional and educational ties and at one with her most trusted adviser, William Cecil, in choosing the personnel of her settlement from among his own particular friends, the survivors of an 'Athenian' circle stretching back to his undergraduate days in Henrician Cambridge.⁴

Despite later tensions and misunderstandings between the Supreme Governor and her leading churchmen it became widely accepted during the 1980s that a synthesis of the two latter portraits produced a scenario which fitted the known facts most satisfactorily. Jones argued that the stubborn resistance of the bishops in the House of Lords put both the queen and the Marian exiles on the defensive early in 1559 but, finding no evidence of Neale's 'puritan choir' in the Commons, concluded that Elizabeth, having at last overcome the bishops, eventually obtained the settlement she had wanted from the first. By setting the Elizabethan legislation in the context of the Henrician and Edwardian settlements, Hudson at the same time demonstrated both how the latter led logically to the former and also placed Cecil and his Cambridge friends centre stage.

Thus, in Professor Cross's words, 'previous implausibilities fell into place'. A convinced Protestant who conformed under Mary, Cecil was in a position to act as intermediary between the *politique* queen and the Marian exiles, eager for further reform, and was amply justified in claiming that he had been 'above all others in propagating religion in the beginning of the queen[']s reign]. Thus:

it seems unlikely that so much concentration will be paid in the future to the independent actions of the Elizabethan House of Commons, and more stress laid instead upon the plans of Cecil and the queen. The simpler solution may well be preferred to the more complex one . . . Most of the Edwardian Protestant bishops . . . had perished in the Marian persecution; on the refusal, therefore, of the catholic bishops to remain in their sees the Crown had little choice but to appoint exiles to their offices . . . While in theory the queen chose the bishops, all the evidence suggests that at this early period

² Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (London, 1988), pp. 27–45.

³ N.L. Jones, *Faith by Statute: parliament and the settlement of religion 1559* (London, 1982).

⁴ W.S. Hudson, *The Cambridge Connection and the Elizabethan Settlement of Religion of 1559* (Durham, North Carolina, 1980).

the responsibilities for the appointments rested with Cecil and his closest associates.⁵

The combined wisdom of Jones, Hudson and Cross did not, however, succeed in sweeping all before it. By 1996 Professor Pettegree was expressing surprise that this should be so, given the authority with which Jones presented his case and a general recognition that the Neale hypothesis was discredited. That elements of Sir John's interpretation survive in recent studies is perhaps due to:

a largely fortuitous congruity between Neale's picture of a Queen with essentially conservative religious inclinations and recent revisionist writings on the English Reformation. Thus the view of the Elizabethan church as a *via media* lives on, even if the evidential base on which Neale constructed his original hypothesis looks increasingly threadbare.⁶

It finds its clearest expression, Pettegree suggests, in that 'half-hearted Reformation', hampered by its hesitant, ambiguous Book of Common Prayer, proposed by Christopher Haigh.⁷

In a brief but authoritative and convincing survey Pettegree proceeds to demolish the two principal planks in the lingering Neale/Haigh case for a theologically conservative queen and a reactionary liturgy. Examining the European developments which would naturally have prompted Elizabeth to express real, if vague and generalized, support for the Augsburg Confession, he concludes that such support 'made her no more of a "Lutheran" than others who sought to exploit its symbolic potential, such as Theodore Beza or the Cardinal of Lorraine'.⁸ More arresting, and perhaps less controversial, is the contention that, far from being a liturgical compromise, the marrying of the 1552 words of institution ('Take and eat this, in remembrance ...') with those of 1549 ('The body of our Lord Jesus Christ ...') represents 'a corrective adjustment rather than a weakening of the doctrine of 1552'.⁹

There can be few further nails left lying around with which to secure the lid of Sir John Neale's coffin. Yet above the incessant hammering it might be wise to heed the voices of those who finally took responsibility for implementing the settlement. 'The *doctrine* is every where most pure', wrote John Jewel in November 1559, 'but as to *ceremonies and*

⁵ Claire Cross, *The Elizabethan Religious Settlement* (Bangor, Gwynedd, 1992), pp. 19–20, 22–3.

⁶ Andrew Pettegree, *Marian Protestantism: six studies* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 131–2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 132, quoting Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: religion, politics and society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993), p. 241.

⁸ Pettegree, *Marian Protestantism*, pp. 133–5.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 135–6.

maskings, there is a little too much foolery'.¹⁰ Unreservedly Protestant the settlement may be construed as being in strictly doctrinal terms. A *via media*, however, it most assuredly was in the broader sense that Elizabeth held grimly and tenaciously to the early evangelical *laissez-faire* of *cuius regio, eius religio*. It was to transpire that King Harry's daughter placed much more emphasis upon *regio* than upon *religio*.

The Elizabethan Settlement falls squarely within those momentous years during which Protestantism sloughed its 'heretical' skin and, a veritable snake in the grass from the point of view of secular princes, emerged as an alternative world-view, in a position to coil itself around many an ancient institution and squeeze the life out of it. Ultimately the Protestant conscience owed no allegiance to anything but the conviction that it and it alone was in possession of the truth. In the doctrines, practices and later refinements of Calvinism it achieved emotional and intellectual – though not, perhaps, spiritual – maturity: what reaches of the heart, mind and soul were left to be scoured after acceptance of the notion, so alien even to genuinely pious members of the Church of England today, of double predestination? Yet it was this emergent brand of Calvinism which many of the returning exiles brought back with them and Calvinism *per se* which was even then in the process of 'harmonizing' the many evangelical tendencies of the foregoing forty years.

The Calvinist tradition would come to dominate the thinking of the two or three generations of clerics who were to govern, or else attempt to subvert, the Elizabethan church. And what the Calvinist tradition proposed in its most extreme form was theocracy: ultimately there was no place in the mysteries of its internal organization even for the godliest of magistrates.

Much of this Elizabeth instinctively understood. Bossy herself, she instantaneously recognized bossiness in others. Her settlement of religion was thus unashamedly pragmatic. Authorizing no reshaping of the administrative structure of the church, she merely instructed her ecclesiastics to pour new wine into old bottles. They were expected to graft revived Protestant doctrines onto a ramshackle and irrational agglomeration of episcopal, decanal and peculiar jurisdictions which owed allegiance to a bewildering and often competing network of church courts. The officials who ran them were by training civil lawyers, administering as best they could such portions of the ancient canon law as remained valid in the wake of the Henrician break with Rome nearly thirty years earlier.

¹⁰ ZL, vol. 1, p. 55: my italics.

Above all Elizabeth's church continued to be governed by bishops – men who at the stroke of her pen ceased to be private citizens and became instead members of the House of Lords, possessors for life of landed estates, and prominent leaders – moral, judicial, financial and military – of provincial society. This very obvious fact has been largely taken for granted by historians since bishops continue to be appointed to this day. But why should it have been so?

A rounded study of the Elizabethan Settlement must take into account, therefore, not only questions of doctrine and liturgy and the parliamentary legislation which made that doctrine, by means of that liturgy, the official religion of England. It requires also an attempt to understand the administrative and financial problems which faced Elizabeth's first bench of bishops as they prepared to take up their duties and a recognition that in these two areas continuity and not change was the keynote.

Whilst the long process of burying Sir John Neale has encouraged a tendency to concentrate on the *minutiae* of doctrinal and parliamentary reform at the expense of broader issues, research into ecclesiastical administration and finance – topics almost impenetrably obscure as recently as the 1930s – has during the last half-century swelled from a trickle into a cataract. The records of many a church court have been dusted off and scrutinized: their procedures are now reasonably well understood and a consensus has emerged that they were moderately efficient. In the process it has become possible to assess the churchmanship and effectiveness of many a hard-pressed Elizabethan diocesan. Since 1956, moreover, when Christopher Hill published his seminal, if in many ways irresponsible, study of the contribution made to the Civil War by what he perceived to be the dangerously exposed financial position of the Church,¹¹ two later generations of historians have been painstakingly assembling a much more satisfactory picture of the financial and social consequences which flowed from Henry VIII's decision not only to dissolve the monasteries but also to 'rationalize' the finances of his prince-bishops. In the same year that Hudson's *Cambridge Connection* appeared Dr Felicity Heal published a magisterial survey of the Tudor episcopate which among much else traced the merciless economic pressures to which the bishops were subjected by the Crown during the mid-century.¹²

¹¹ Christopher Hill, *Economic Problems of the Church from Archbishop Whitgift to the Long Parliament* (Oxford, 1956).

¹² Felicity Heal, *Of Prelates and Princes: a study of the economic and social position of the Tudor episcopate* (Cambridge, 1980). [Henceforth 'Heal, PP': see abbreviations]

To this formidable body of work W.S. Hudson's *Cambridge Connection* scarcely alludes, presenting a very simplified view of Elizabeth's settlement and by implication lending weight to the impossibly rosy (and frequently perverse) interpretation of it espoused by William P. Haugaard.¹³ If Hudson was right to emphasize the importance of Cecil's role and the significance of his network of friendships, he was wrong to imply that the implementation of the settlement can be seen as a species of academic *coup*, heavily influenced by such matters as a shared enthusiasm for reforming the pronunciation of Greek.

What determined the fortunes of the episcopal candidates of 1559–62 was not their membership, real or honorary, of an academic club founded by Ascham and Sir John Cheke but rather a series of vital debates during Elizabeth's first months as queen about ecclesiastical finances. These had profound and wide-ranging consequences for the eventual composition of her first bench. They were considerably more comprehensive and sustained than has been recognized, and from them the bishops emerged largely victorious.

The early chapters of the present study trace the course of those debates and the story of those who did or did not become bishops in the three years following Parker's consecration in December 1559. Thereafter the history of the replenishment of the Elizabethan bench is treated in a broadly chronological way. The whole has gradually emerged from a close scrutiny of Cecil's memoranda and his letters to, from and about the bishops. In addition, particular attention has been paid to two major sources of information about ecclesiastical appointments preserved among the exchequer records at the Public Record Office: the composition books (series E334) and their accompanying plea rolls (series E337). These have been surprisingly little used and imperfectly understood. In the hope that future historians will be able to refine the picture further by reference to other classes of exchequer record, the evidence they have yielded is presented in full in Appendix I.

Of vital importance in studying the course of ecclesiastical events during 1559 are three memoranda surviving in Cecil's papers which have a direct bearing on the creation of the episcopal bench. They are susceptible to more rigorous analysis than scholars have been willing to accept, and since the precise dating of two of them is crucial to many of

¹³ William P. Haugaard, *Elizabeth and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 32–51; neither of Hudson's footnote references to this work – pp. 116 n. 12 and 136 n. 9 – cites these pages.