

2008

# Protestant and Catholic Cooperation in Early Modern England

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## Recommended Citation

Diller, Lisa Clark, "Protestant and Catholic Cooperation in Early Modern England" (2008). *Faculty Works*. 10.  
[https://knowledge.e.southern.edu/facworks\\_hist/10](https://knowledge.e.southern.edu/facworks_hist/10)

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## Protestant and Catholic Cooperation in Early Modern England

The reign of James II gave English Catholics a chance to interact much more intentionally with their Protestant fellow citizens. The rich debate and mutual analysis that ensued with James's lifting of the censorship of Catholic printing and penal laws changed assumptions, terminology, and expectations regarding religious and civil practices. A more comprehensive articulation of what should be expected of citizens was the result of these debates and English political life after 1689 provided a wider variety of possibilities for trans-denominational cooperation in social and political enterprises.

The continuing importance of anti-Catholicism in the attitudes of English Protestants has been emphasized by historians from John Miller to Tim Harris.<sup>123456</sup> Without denying this, I argue that the content and quality of this anti-Catholicism was changing and that too great a focus on the mutual antagonism undermines the significant elements of interaction, cooperation and influence.

For English Catholics, the ascension of James II meant both the end of persecution and the possibility for greater religious practice and involvement in English political life. The country appeared to be flooded with priests and

Intentional Catholic interaction with Protestants, even at their risk.

Much of the actual work of the clergy, as printed in sermons and testified to by contemporaries, was irenic. They drew attention to virtue and morality rather than doctrine. The Dominican court preacher, Philip Ellis's sermons were chronically filled with exhortations to act in love and reason, "because humane affection, good education, and the formalities of

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<sup>1</sup>Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in eighteenth-century England* (Manchester, 1993; Magee), Brian, *The English Recusants* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne), 1938; Kenneth Campell, *The Intellectual Struggle of the English Papists in the Seventeenth Century* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellon, 1986); John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558-1689* (London: Longman, 2000).

<sup>2</sup>Tim Harris, *London Crowds in the Reign of Charles II* (Cambridge, 1987), 30.

<sup>3</sup>Mark Goldie, "The Theory of Religious Intolerance in Restoration England," in O. P. Grell, J. Israel, and N. Tyacke, eds. *From Persecution to Toleration: The Glorious Revolution and Religion in England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 331.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Ashcraft, "Latitudinarianism and Toleration: historical myth versus political history", in R. Kroll, R. Ashcraft, and P. Zagorin, eds, *Philosophy, Science and Religion in England, 1640-1700* (Cambridge, 1992), 153.

<sup>5</sup>Tony Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution* (Cambridge, 1996), 45, 46.

<sup>6</sup>Ole Peter Grell and Roy Porter, "Toleration in Enlightenment Europe," in O. Grell and R. Porter, eds, *Toleration in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), 1.

religion do often put on the mask of divine love.”<sup>7</sup> “Blessed are the peacemakers’ is for the monarchs who are establishing the empire of peace,” he declared.<sup>8</sup> John Gother, although attacking Protestant polemical sermons in general, conceded that “as long as pulpits employ themselves in correcting the vices of the congregation, in teaching them to lead good lives, . . . this is all very well; `tis what Catholics do, and I would do it myself were I to preach.”<sup>9</sup> This emphasis on morality and good works, while clearly common throughout Christendom, was also used self-consciously by Catholic clergy to promote ecumenical sentiment and cooperation.<sup>10</sup> The effectiveness of the call for “practical religion” was a lesson Protestants learned well.

Catholic polemicists, whether attempting to convert Protestants, to deflect prejudice, or to promote toleration of recusants, consistently argued in ways that they thought would appeal to English Protestants in particular. Thus, they continued to maintain that Catholics did not want to undermine the Church of England legally and to warn the king not to do anything that would appear otherwise. “I have thought of a method,” one worried Catholic wrote to King James, “wherein if your majesty think fit to proceed, you shall do nothing but what is legal, pious, and honorable, and therefore nothing hazardous; and appear a great supporter of the Church of England, according to your promise, and consequently take off all manner of suspicion that you intend its ruin.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Phillip Ellis, *First Sermon Preached before their Majesties* (London, 1687), 29.

<sup>8</sup> Idem, *Second Sermon Preached before Their Majesties* (London, 1687), 26.

<sup>9</sup> Gother, *Pulpit Sayings*, ii, iii.

<sup>10</sup> Bonaventure Gifford, *A Sermon on the Nativity of our Lord* (London, 1688), 14; *A Pastoral Letter from the Four Catholic Bishops; The Lay-Man’s Answer to the Lay-Man’s Opinion* (London: 1687); John Sergeant, *The Fourth Catholick Letter* (London, 1688); Thomas Ward, *England’s Reformation*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. (London, 1772).

<sup>11</sup> Proposal Concerning the Clergy, 1687, Add MS 32095, ff. 247-250, British Library, London. It was proposed that the king enforce the Proclamation calling for a fulfillment of proper clerical duties: reading the requisite Scripture and being in the proper parishes as often as policy called for. The idea was that Anglican ministers would not be able to do this, and so they would need dispensation from the king, and when he gave it, or negotiated to give it, they would in gratitude support his Declaration and promise support to members of Parliament who would support him. This support of the Church of England would also make the Dissenters more dependent on the king.

Even more clear is the fact that Protestants and Catholics were interacting socially on a regular basis. The solidly Protestant Brockbank family in Westmoreland were friends with the Catholic Leyburns and visited with Bishop Leyburn at his father's house during his apostolic visit.<sup>12</sup> These social connections were repeated throughout England. "Many of them [Roman Catholics] are our kind neighbors, familiar acquaintances, or near kindred," wrote Thomas Comber, "and some of them (where prejudice doth not blind them) persons of great reason and of good inclination."<sup>13</sup> William Wake preached at a Presbyterian woman's funeral on the continent, "to a numerous audietory [sic] of papists as well as Protestants."<sup>14</sup> This phenomenon seems to have been common especially on the continent. English exiles, both Protestant and Catholic, clung together. Wake noted this over and over and recorded all his own interactions with Catholics, which greatly impressed him.

I plainly saw that neither the Father nor Dr. Piques were any bigots for the Corruption of their Church. Of this I had further Evidence, in my last Discourse with the latter just before I left Paris. Which was another Argument to me that I had no need to change my Religion, even in their opinion in those particulars.<sup>15</sup>

"I dined with the Archbishop of York, where was Peter Walsh, that Romish priest so well known for his moderation," admitted John Evelyn, "professing the Church of England to be a true member of the Catholic Church. He is used to go to our Public Prayers without a scruple, and did not acknowledge the Pope's Infallibility, only primacy of order."<sup>16</sup> John Gother contended that "there are few ministers, but have some Papists in their parish; and few Laymen of any Business, but have some Relations, Neighbors, Correspondents, Acquaintance, or Conversation with some Papists."<sup>17</sup> He challenged his readers to look at those Catholics with whom they

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<sup>12</sup> *Diary and Letterbook of Rev. Thomas Brockbank*, Chetham Society, vol. 89, (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1930), 2.

<sup>13</sup> Comber, *Friendly and Seasonable Advice*, A3.

<sup>14</sup> William Wake's Diary, 14, MS 2932, Lambeth Palace, London.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>16</sup> Evelyn, *Diary*, vol. 2, 258.

<sup>17</sup> John Gother, *Pulpit Sayings: Or the Characters of the Pulpit Papist Examined* (London, 1688), 3.

interacted to determine the character of the Roman faith. Both Catholics and Protestants, then, articulated that social interaction between the faiths produced understanding and moderation on the part of both parties.

Central to the Catholic mission was the project of educating young people. The regular orders were especially good at this. The *Pastoral Letter from the Bishop of Meaux* exhorted Catholic parents to send their children to catechism weekly.<sup>18</sup> The students at Oxford and Cambridge were obviously a target,<sup>19</sup> but it was in primary school education that Catholic clergy especially shone. Foley asserts that ten schools in England were begun by Jesuits at this time, and he records that the school in Lincoln became so crowded that new premises were sought. About sixty students attended a school run by Father Henry Hamerton in Yorkshire and he had to hire a secular schoolmaster because he was gone so frequently. “Many Protestants, though remaining in their error, entrusted their sons to him,” Foley declares.<sup>20</sup> Even Wales had a boarding school. Luttrell recorded that “23<sup>rd</sup> June [1686], the Jesuits school at the Savoy, for teaching children gratis, opened this day . . .” In 1688 he added that “the scholars bred up under Poulton the Jesuit, at the Savoy, are to be elected King’s scholars and sent to Magdalen College in Oxford.” He further noted “there is a popish school setting up in St. Martins Lane, who are to [have] 4 mistresses to teach young gentlewoman, protestants and papists; and tis at the sole charge of the queen.”<sup>21</sup> The College at the Savoy was the crown jewel of Catholic education in England. James “gave the Jesuits leave to build [a chapel] in the Savoy; and settled a college there fore the education of children; into which two hundred Roman Catholics were admitted.”<sup>22</sup> Foley suggests that the school was opened with the promise that no one would be

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<sup>18</sup> *Pastoral Letter from the Bishop of Meaux*, 36.

<sup>19</sup> Lord President from L. W. Finch, Sept. 1688, Add MS 32095, f. 270, British Library, London.

<sup>20</sup> Foley, *Records of the English Province*, vol. 5, 62, 650, 727, 267.

<sup>21</sup> *Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs*, 404, 426, 424. He noted that in 1688 Protestant free schools had been set up in St. James and St. Martin’s Lane to instruct in the Christian religion and trade, p. 437. These seem to be in direct competition with the Catholic schools. The king made provisions for Jesuit education in Ireland as well, The *Calendar of State Papers* records that he gave dispensations to Jesuit school masters and said that he would fund schools and wanted Jesuits to fill them. *Calendar* (1687-1689), Aug. 31, 1688, June 18, 1688.

<sup>22</sup> Macpherson, *History of Great Britain*, vol. 1, 149.

pressured to change their religion. The high academic prowess of the students spoke well for the school, and the Catholic students competed with Protestant scholars and apparently bested them.<sup>23</sup>

While Catholics were automatically distrusted in the whirlwind surrounding the Glorious Revolution and divested of any ability to participate in a militia, nevertheless, it was understood that not all of them were traitors.<sup>24</sup> “We have as many papists in our Duch armye as we had in our English,” one potential Jacobite declared. Thus, “it is plaine that...all papists are not alike, and then the danger we have apprehended from papists is not universal as we have affirmed.”<sup>25</sup> It was also obvious that foreign Catholics were split in their loyalties, so clearly political allegiance transcended religious affiliation. The king of France, wrote Burnet, “was resolved to separate the character of the most holy father from that of a temporal prince.”<sup>26</sup> Catholics, it was recognized, were loyal to William as well as to James. Thus, those who could be loyal to the new government were considered good subjects and citizens. “Although there be a great many papists there, I know they wait the first opportunity of declaring for the Prince of Orange.”<sup>27</sup> Another Catholic was commended because he had “pleasantly and quietly behaved himself in these present troublesome times.”<sup>28</sup> The Nonconformist Edward Calamy had noticed in Utrecht that “the Papists were thought to be as much in the Interest of their country as the Protestants themselves.”<sup>29</sup>

Thus, being an Englishman was more than being Protestant. Indeed, reminded one Anglican clergyman, “do not therefore so consider Roman Catholics as to forget they are

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<sup>23</sup> Foley, *Records of the English Province*, vol. 5, 302; Darrell, *Vindication of St. Ignatius*, viii.

<sup>24</sup> *Journal of the House of Commons*, 1688-1693, p. 212; Sealed Document, Nov. 4, 1688, Egerton 3336, f. 116, British Library, London; To Danby, Dec. 15, 1688, Egerton, f. 3336, f. 65, British Library, London.

<sup>25</sup> To the Lords upon the Present Condition of Government, 1688/89, DDCa 17/214, p. 9(b), Lancashire Record Office, Preston, England.

<sup>26</sup> Burnet, *History of My Own Time*, vol. 3, 282.

<sup>27</sup> To Danby from [Phitt?] [Birckenstaffe?], Dec. 15, 1688, Egerton 3336, f. 65, British Library, London.

<sup>28</sup> Regarding William Walmesley in Lancashire County, Nov. 4, 1688, Egerton 3336, f. 116. British Library, London.

<sup>29</sup> Edmund Calamy, *An Historical Account of My Own Life* (London: Colburn and Bentley, 1830), 171.

Englishmen and good Christians.”<sup>30</sup> Toleration was desirable, some thought, for this very reason. “Why shall any free borne English men be fettered with laws that deprive him of his birthrights so long as they behave themselves like good and loyall subjects to their king and Country.”<sup>31</sup> Brian Fairfax declared himself unwilling to work for James, although he admitted that some “good Protestants” could serve a Catholic king.<sup>32</sup> “Religion without mixtures of ambition and interest works no violent effects upon the state.”<sup>33</sup> The Oaths, according to some in the debate, should be taken away because “they answer not their end . . . . We urge ye Invalidity and Insecurity of such Oaths to Government, of which our own Countrey is great proof . . . In all which Revolutions there has been great store of swearing Pros and Con.”<sup>34</sup> “If you are an Englishman, methinks tis no good sign of the religion you are of, that it has inspired you with the scorn and hatred of your countrymen to that degree as to spend a reproach upon them.”<sup>35</sup> Thus, English people would choose whether to support their government or not based on many things, and religious affiliation could not determine it, as could be seen by the fact that there were Catholics in William’s army.<sup>36</sup>

Protestant reciprocation.

Protestants commonly attended Catholic services, whether out of curiosity or a desire to heckle. Even the Bishop of Durham went to Whitehall to observe the “popish” ceremonies, which Narcissus Luttrell recorded as leading to prompt rumors that he had “turned papist.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *An Answer of a Minister of the Church of England*, 47. See responses to the Three Questions in Duckett, 22-45; also, *Journal of the House of Commons*, 1688-93, Feb. 2, 1689, and 9 July 1689 which allow for the possibility of loyal Catholics, though not allowing them in positions of government; and To Danby, Dec. 15, 1688, Egerton 3336, f. 65, British Library, London.

<sup>31</sup> By George Hickton[?] “Morralties offered to the consideration of all honest and [?] gentlemen,” 1688/9, DDCa 17/214, f. 34(b), Lancashire County Record Office, Preston, England.

<sup>32</sup> *Memoirs of Brian Fairfax*, 1685, Add MS 39992, f. 402, British Library, London.

<sup>33</sup> *An Answer of a Minister of the Church of England*, 12.

<sup>34</sup> “Reasons why Oaths should not be part of ye Test,” Add MS 28093, f. 243, British Library, London.

<sup>35</sup> *The Queries offered by Thomas Ward Answered*, 39.

<sup>36</sup> Sheffield, False steps, Add MS 27382, ff. 26(b), 97, British Library, London.

<sup>37</sup> Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs*, Apr. 1687, 399.

One Protestant satirist recognized that Catholics were very aware of their Protestant listeners. “Many English Hereticks resort often to our sermons,” the parody charged the Jesuit Father Petre with gloating, “and I have recommended to our fathers to preach... as little as they can of controversy.”<sup>38</sup> John Evelyn went more than once “to hear the music of the Italians in the new chapel” opened by the king in Whitehall. “I heard the famous eunuch, Cifaccio, sing in the new Popish chapel this afternoon,” he recorded in 1687. “It was indeed very rare and with great skill. He came over from Rome, esteemed one of the best of the voices in Italy. Much crowding— little devotion.”<sup>39</sup> Especially in the court chapels, the spectacle of the services and the opportunity of meeting with possible patrons, as well as fascination regarding the unknown, compelled the curious to attend.

Monastic houses were set up wholesale, sponsored by the king or wealthy Catholics made up of regular clergy who had been living on the Continent up till this point. These houses made a convenient place of worship for many Catholics. “The monastery at St. Johns Clerkenwell, lately set up there, is opened, and mass said publicly there.”<sup>40</sup> Once again, Luttrell’s account is valuable for demonstrating what Catholic activities caused public attention. “The 2<sup>nd</sup> [Feb, 1688], the Dominicans opened their chapel in Great Lincoln’s Inn Fields.... The Earl of Salisbury is building a popish chapel at Hatfield... The chapel at Magdalen College in Oxford is fitting up for the service of the Roman Catholics settled in that college.”<sup>41</sup>

Results—Reformation of manners, educational enterprises, national identity/economic cooperation against enemies during William’s wars.

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<sup>38</sup> A Letter from ye Reverend Father Petre, Stowe MS 305, f. 137(b), British Library, London.

<sup>39</sup> John Evelyn, *Diary*, ed. E.S. De Beer, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1955), 271, 273; Blundell, *Cavalier*, 248.

<sup>40</sup> Luttrell, *Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs* Dec. 1687, 426.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Feb, 1688, 430; March 1688, 433; April 1688, 436.

The declaration of indulgence of James II was central to tightening the boundaries of the control of civil power in the religious sphere and “the rhetoric on all sides was about separating faith from authority.” This process promoted a reformation of manners and contributed to defining “religion” as “personal faith,” p. 44. James said that Catholic morality had helped convert him (p. 64) and the dissenters could freely advocate piety because of the indulgences (p. 65). “Anglican voluntary societies grew more vigorous under the challenge of James’s reign,” and there was competition regarding who could out-do the other group in matters of piety, p. 66. Mark Knights “Meer Religion and the church-state of Restoration England”, *A Nation Transformed*, Pincus and Houston, eds, (Cambridge: University Press), 2001.

“Under James it seems that the [Catholic] mission did at least gain a foothold in a number of towns which it was to use to good effect in the second half of the eighteenth century but which, at the time, did not produce any spectacular results in terms of conversions.” The Jesuits opened 12 schools. “The main Jesuit school in London, which was in the Savoy, was a considerable success. It was explicitly non-denominational and taught nothing controversial, although it had a Catholic chapel attached. Within months of opening, it had attracted over four hundred pupils, most of them Protestants. . . . The success of these schools stimulated the opening of rival Protestant schools; the endowment of one of these was diverted after the Revolution to the maintenance of poor vicars.” (pp. 248, 249). *Popery and Politics in England, 1660-1688*, John Miller (Cambridge, 1973).

“Ironically enough, therefore, these Jesuit schools were a **collateral** cause of that Protestant charity school movement which was to dominate the eighteenth century. This is not to say that without Poulton and Petre there would have been no charity school movement. Nor that it would have otherwise tarried for a generation. The problem of schooling the urban masses in London was already in men’s minds. But the Protestant movement to cope with this began when it did, because of the example, and the success, and the feared consequences, of the English Jesuits. *Education Under Penalty*, A.C.F. Beales, p. 227 (University of London, 1963).

‘The scholars bred up under Poulton the Jesuit at the Savoy,’ warned Luttrell, ‘are to be elected King’s Scholars [at Cambridge] and sent to Maudlin College in Oxford.’ The Bishop of

Ely (Symon Patrick) explained that ‘the Romish priests were then so busy that they set up a school to teach youths for nothing, which we thought might draw many into their snare, and therefore we agreed to do the same....’.... In June 1687 four Anglican bishops designed to erect a ‘free school’ in Lincoln’ Inn Fields, and ‘the project is afoot in divers other places, the Protestants being resolved not to be outdone in charity by any of a different persuasion.’” Beale, p. 253. I can’t tell where he got the quotes from. (Possibly the note on page 254). “The school at St. Margaret’s, Westminster, set up in 1688, had been started, said Hendley ‘to countermine the policy of the Jesuits, who at that time had erected a Charity Grammar School in the Savoy, to corrupt and poison the minds of the poorer sort of youth.’” Beales, p. 254.

The Society for the Promoting of Christian Knowledge set up charity schools between 1710 to 1730—so many that it has been called a “movement” resulting from puritan philanthropy. “It was also to many a crusade defending Anglican Protestantism against irreligion, popery and even the Jacobites.” *Albion’s People* by John Rule, p. 145. (London: Longman, 1992)

The SPCK and the Societies for the Reformation of Manners were formed to promote the Anglican church in the aftermath of the Revolution, to keep the loyalty of the masses. “The Church of England actively sought to spread the word of God to all the people and, in so doing, to transform itself into a genuinely popular” faith. “Very real attempts were made to Christianize the poor,” especially through the charity school movement. *The Long Eighteenth Century*, Frank O’Gorman, p. 168 (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997).

The problem after the Act of Toleration was not merely popery, but immorality. It was the concern of the Church of England in particular that the Act of Toleration would result in less religiosity. The deist John Toland defended himself in dialogue with Nonconformist reformers that the toleration he advocated would not promote ungodliness. “By liberty, I don’t mean licentiousness, but forbearance.”<sup>42</sup> The irenic Robert Fleming defined one of the main ideas that humans could agree on: “that there is a vast difference between Virtue and Vice.”<sup>43</sup> The Dissenting John Woodhouse also wrote to the Church of England that he was very happy “to aid

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<sup>42</sup> John Toland to ---- dissenter, 1707, MS 933, f. 8, p. 3, Lambeth Palace Library, London.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Fleming, *Divine Government of Nations*, 19.

you in so good a work, as that wherein you are so happily united . . . to inspect Markets, to find out Drunkards, Swearers, and Cursers, that formerly swarm'd there.”<sup>44</sup> The key, Sylvester reminded the Protestants, was “that we can differ in our sentiments about the Modes of Discipline and Worship, and yet most dearly love each other . . . [As I love] so many of whom I find so very much beyond myself in Parts and Learning and Practical Christianity.”<sup>45</sup> “Practical Christianity” was the lesson learned from the debates with the Catholics.

During the Catholic missionary effort, practical Christianity, “good works,” had been the point on which all the polemicists could agree.<sup>46 47</sup> The Benedictine Philip Ellis always emphasized in his sermons that, as a foundation for good Catholic theology, good works needed to go along with faith. He used the Beatitudes as a beginning point for discussing the good life, the importance of reason, unity and moral living.<sup>4849</sup> The Jesuits recorded that in their education they emphasized “good morals.”<sup>50</sup> Catholics sought to set themselves up as promoting a religion that would result in changed lives, lives guided by morals that all Christians could agree were good.

Burnet argued that the best way to counteract “the mocks of the Roman Catholics” was to live a godly life.<sup>51</sup> Another Protestant, arguing against expelling James declared that during the latter’s reign, “we got the reputation of good protestants by it [bringing in William], though I fear not good men, if that some of us have not onely shone ourselves religiously concerned for our Religion but in some respect not in honesty.”<sup>52</sup> John Howe, a Dissenter, was a constant promoter

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<sup>44</sup> Woodhouse, *Call to Reformation*, iii, iv.

<sup>45</sup> Sylvester, *Holy Confidence Well Improved*, v, vi.

<sup>46</sup> Bonaventure Gifford, *A Sermon of the Nativity of our Lord* (London, 1688), 14, 23.

<sup>47</sup> Gother, *Pulpit-Sayings: Or the Chatacters of the Pulpit Papist Examined* (London, 1688), ii.

<sup>48</sup> Philip Ellis, *A Second Sermon before Their Majesties* (London, 1687), 24-26; also his *First Sermon Preached Before Their Majesties* (London, 1687), 26, 29.

<sup>49</sup> John Gother, *The Pope’s Supremacy Asserted* (London, 1688), 8.

<sup>50</sup> Henry Foley, *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, vol. 5, (London: Burnes and Oates, 1879), 152.

<sup>51</sup> Burnet, *A Letter to a Lord upon his Happy Conversion* (London, 1688), 1, 2.

<sup>52</sup> To the Lords upon the present condition of Government, 1688/9, DDCa 17/214, f. 9, Lancashire Record Office, Preston, England.

of morality and the change in one's life that Christianity should bring, but he did not limit the unity of Christian holiness to Protestants. "The notorious sins of wicked Protestants will conclude against the whole Profession," he warned.<sup>53</sup> "Who doubts but there may be found of the Roman Communion better men than some Protestants?"<sup>54</sup> "The Church of England," wrote another Anglican polemicist, "allows not only that all Protestants have true faith and true loyalty as well as she... but also that pagans are capable of moral virtue."<sup>55</sup> Protestants as well as Catholics filled their literature with affirmations of all who lived a righteous life. They overtly referenced the godly Catholics who were practicing their religion among them and with whom they were debating, and were clearly using the language of reformation as a polemical tool in this controversy.<sup>56</sup>

"Reformation," which was to tie Protestants together, referred less to improving the sinfulness of the Roman Church and more to combating sinfulness in the lives of individuals and society. The Societies for the Reformation of Manners, begun in 1690, were local groups of men who organized to prosecute crimes that violated the statutes regulating morality. They relied on informers and prosecuted offenders in the temporal courts. They went beyond the attempt to enforce existing laws about immorality and campaigned to enact even more strict regulations of behavior.<sup>57</sup> "The ends of good laws are frustrated, if private Men must not Convict offenders; for what great use are our Laws against vicious Practices and Profaness, if Multitudes may offend, and none be punished?" complained Daniel Williams. "What can be pretended to exempt you from doing so small a thing as informing?"<sup>58</sup> This involvement of private people in the lives

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<sup>53</sup> Howe, *Carnality of Religious Contention*, 49.

<sup>54</sup> John Howe, *Of Charity* (London, 1683), 49.

<sup>55</sup> *The Trial and Examination of a Late Libel*, in *Somers Tracts*, vol. 9, 206-207.

<sup>56</sup> Calamy, *Historical Account*, 170-171.

<sup>57</sup> Every, *High Church Party*, 149. Every claims that these activities were unpopular with the clergy because they meant cooperating with Dissenters and because "they tended to obscure the distinction between loose living and actual crime," 149, 169.

<sup>58</sup> Daniel Williams, *A Sermon to the Societies, etc.* (London, 1698), 32-33. Edmund Calamy also promoted informing and castigated those who thought it was interfering, *A Sermon before the Societies*, 11-13. Claydon and Every point out that this kind of informing was very unpopular with the people at large and led to the gradual demise of the Societies soon after the beginning of the next century.

of other private citizens was a different kind of reforming zeal than that which sought to promote a specific, truly biblical ecclesiology. It was the kind of true Christianity that had proven so popular in the sermons during the Catholic missionary effort.

Reformation, in these contexts, was not so much a change in the people's theology as a change in their behavior. They had not, as had been pointed out during the Catholic missionary efforts, been won over by the theology of Catholics. But they still were not behaving as Christians should. In some ways this was the new means of combating the threat of popery; now there was no way to convert England from Protestantism, "but by Atheism, Irreligion, and Debauchery of the Gentry and Clergy . . . . Now Swearing, Cursing, Damning, Whoring, Sabbath-breaking, hating, reviling, and persecuting of all serious godliness were grown very modish."<sup>59</sup> Reform meant more now than the extirpation of Popery. Vincent Alsop declared that it was obvious that the people were steeped in "profaneness" because the "wise God has run through a course of Means to Reform a Nation, and yet the symptoms are as threatening as ever."<sup>60</sup> "It must be a very mistaken notion of Religion," declared John Shower, "to imagine that any can be a very good Christian, that is not a very good man."<sup>61</sup> Further, "No Christians, no Protestants, who differ in lesser Matters as to Faith and Worship will plead for the Allowance of such Corruption of Manners, and Debauchery of Life."<sup>62</sup> Reform was morality, not doctrine or ecclesiology.

Such a promotion of right religion led to the formation of voluntary societies, among them those for Reformation of Manners, Propagation of the Gospel, and Promotion of Christian Knowledge. This idea that truth and right living should be spread among the people in a specific manner was also thanks to the Catholic missionary effort.

Catholic gentry sponsored apprenticeships and almshouses after 1688 for both Catholics and Protestants—did this inspire Protestants? (charity movement and Methodists?), p. 84. Michael A. Mullett, *Catholics in Britain and Ireland, 1558-1829* (NY: St. Martin's Press), 1998.

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<sup>59</sup> John Woodhouse, *A Call of Reformation* (London, 1697), 37.

<sup>60</sup> Vincent Alsop, *A Sermon for the Reformation of Manners* (London, 1698), 21; also Williams, *Sermon to the Societies*, v.

<sup>61</sup> Shower, *Sermon to the Societies*, 1.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

In the C18/C19, the lay people were more involved in starting charity schools and taking a hand in the running of their congregations. Some Catholics even worked with the Anglican political liberals like William Rathbone to provide interdenominational education for the children of Irish immigrants, including Dissenters and Catholics, but when Rathbone and allies were out of power, the Catholics were excluded and had to go back to expanding their own school system. (p. 348) *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850*, John Bossy (New York: Oxford, 1976). publicly in their habits.

Although unity was clearly a big part of the language of the participants in the Societies, it was not, as Anthony Claydon has pointed out, the primary reason for the movement. But Claydon's main point is that reformation was promoted by William's court reformers (led by Burnet) to gain the nation's support for his policies and that "the societies provided a platform for leading court spokesmen."<sup>63</sup> I argue that the unity promoted during the reign of William III was not simply a reaction to the Act of Toleration, a practical gambit by the Church of England to defuse the Dissenting threat, but that it was a natural outgrowth of the discussions during the Catholic missionary efforts. The Societies, supported by both Dissenters and Anglicans, were an attempt to promote true reformation. And this was the unity that they had decided was most important—combating sin in the world and spreading the gospel.

The fertile discussion during the reign of James II had implications beyond those discussed in this dissertation and warrant even further study. But a few tantalizing themes are clear. First, Catholic educational progress in England in the 1680s loomed large in the Protestant mind. Dissenting and Anglican schools were often clearly in competition with the Catholic ones. A more detailed study of the impact of Catholic pedagogy and practice on Protestant education is needed. Second, the common focus on morality as a replacement for religious homogeneity seems to have directly contributed to the Reformation of Manners movement, with its trans-denominational attempt at institutionalizing social norms for behavior rather than emphasizing a common set of worship practices or theology. Third, the change in religious dialogue allowed

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<sup>63</sup> Claydon, *William III*, 118.

for the development of ideas like Socinianism and Unitarianism, which became increasingly difficult to ignore. As accusations of atheism replaced concerns with “popery,” the tenor of religious life and the range of possible religious ideologies were concomitantly altered.

Anticatholicism as a unifying force in English society was gradually undermined, to be replaced by other concerns.