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## **Abstract**

In October 2011 the 22<sup>nd</sup> Commonwealth Head of Government meeting was held in Australia to discuss the end, among other things, of discrimination against Catholics in the British Monarchy. This amendment to British law brought to a close one of most controversial and at times violent aspects of religious history in Great Britain. Since the Act of Supremacy in 1534 an unstoppable wave of anti – catholic feeling had spread through England, maintained by anti – Catholic legislation and a strong Protestant establishment. The power and reach of Rome inspired fear and mistrust among Protestants which only created hatred and bigotry. This thesis discusses the discrimination against Roman Catholics in the England between 1534 and 1688. The objectives of this thesis it to show the origins of Anti – Catholicism in both politics and daily life and to discover why it persisted across historical periods namely the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and explore its manifestation in England. The various acts of law and historical events impeded, hindered and harmed Catholics living in England. I will examine both primary and secondary sources to further my own research by using various publications and pieces of legislation that illustrate my point as well as looking at historical events.

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Dedication

*For Granny*

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## Chapter One

### An Introduction – The Reformation

*'Hatred of the Pope, remains a defining feature of English public opinion'*

– Benjamin Disraeli<sup>1</sup>

The political battle between Catholics and Protestant has been an ongoing problem since the reformation in the sixteenth century. The intricate problems between these two theologies can still be seen in England, Scotland and Ireland, where until recently, Catholics and Protestant failed to recognise their common traits and attributes in Northern Ireland. The two however, have not always had a fair ground to play on where Catholics have been seen as inferior and indeed condescended too. For many years the term Catholic has been synonymous with superstition, fear and idolatry. In the 1840's when Ireland was struck by the potato famine causing mass emigration and death, it was seen as a punishment for their misguided faith. This kind of bigotry was led to and fostered by a deep rooted fear that directed a severe discrimination against Catholics in England.

Its origins can be traced back to Martin Luther's ninety-five theses in 1517 and the establishment of the Church of England in 1534 by Henry VIII. Luther's attack on the Catholic Church were justified for their sale of indulgences among other things while Henry VIII's case was matrimonial. Defensible or not, Henry VIII's acceptance of the reformed church brought Protestantism to the England and in doing so ignited centuries of religious conflict which was seen in every part of life. The various phases of the English Reformation were largely driven by changes in government policy, to which public opinion gradually accommodated itself. With the invention of the printing press, mass circulation of the bible and a more well educated upper and middle classes, ideas of theology were more widely spread bringing into question the position of the Church. The church exercised wide-ranging power in the England which was seen a detrimental towards the economy and the power of the monarchy where ones civil duty was to obey the sovereign but spiritually they looked to Rome. Under the influence of Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, the position of the church in England was secure. Initially, Henry VIII was outraged by Martin Luther's ninety-five theses even going so far as publishing 'A Defence of the Seven Sacraments' for which he was awarded the title Defender of the Faith<sup>2</sup>. Devout as he was, Henry VIII's faith came into

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<sup>1</sup> Bew, P. *Ireland: The Politics of Enmity 1789 – 2006* (Oxford, 2007), viii.

<sup>2</sup> Weir, A. *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (London, 2007), p. 76 – 77.

conflict with his more personal desires, a breach occurred whereby the King wanted a divorce based on his desire for a son to cement the Tudor dynasty and avert another civil war but was refused by the Pope. Having seemingly exhausted all avenues of annulment and under the influence of the extremely attractive yet evangelical Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII summoned Parliament to dissolve his marriage. The reformation parliament as it became known brought together an array of disaffected clergy men, lawyers, nobles and politicians who were determined to extricate the Vatican from English affairs and essentially establish the first nation state under the pretext of divorcing Henry VIII from Catherine of Aragon which was done so 23 May 1533<sup>3</sup>. During the Reformation Parliament, the Act of Supremacy was enacted formally breaking with Rome by established the sovereign as Head of the Church of England with jurisdiction over all spiritual matters<sup>4</sup>. The restriction of the Vatican's power in England, justified or not, by their many transgressions marked a new phase in the lives of Catholics throughout England when reformation spread even further. It was at this time that the seeds of sectarianism began between Catholics and the reformed faith.

The various forms of legislation enacted throughout the 1530's impeded Catholics in several ways. At first their conscience was compromised between loyalty to the King and their belief system, to defy the King meant certain death yet to hide one's true faith would be hypocritical. The reformed church preached justification in faith alone and against attending mass or good works, furthermore it believed in the primacy of scripture which was being widely circulated. This meant that the Vatican could no longer control the interpretation of the bible for the laity in its meaning. Catholics especially in villages were forbidden to observe their feast days which were seen to encourage idleness and giving offerings to images while the Bible was now printed in English instead of traditional Latin. The need to cement the reformation in its early days were spurred on by the sense of impending invasion and maintenance of the new ruling classes. Firstly, the threat posed by Charles V to avenge his discarded aunt, Catherine of Aragon, and restore the Catholic Church's authority caused a fermentation of faith to remain steadfast against a militant faith, that is to say had Catholic Europe not been so aggressive about the religious changes made in England perhaps they would not have taken such an extreme course of action. If the English government had been given the freedom to act as they please without reprisals from either Spain or the Papacy than maybe they would not have become so anti – Catholic. Charles V was in no position at this

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<sup>3</sup> Fraser, A. *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (London, 2002), p.233.

<sup>4</sup> The Act of Supremacy, (C 65/143, m. 5, nos. 8 and 9, 1534)

time to intervene militarily in English affairs but the government had no idea where his priorities lay. The Queen was supported by the clergy and the people in her defence, Bishop John Fisher personally asked the Imperial Ambassador to urge Charles V to invade England and restore the Queen. Given ‘the great injury done to Madame, your aunt’ the Imperial Ambassador, Eustace Chapuys, wrote ‘you can hardly avoid making war now upon this King and Kingdom’<sup>5</sup>. Henry VIII anticipated trouble with the Emperor, fearing that he might have brought England to the brink of war by marrying Anne Boleyn. However, none of these things deterred him, one by one he removed all obstacles in his way and any others that would present themselves. Although the King’s great matter, as it became known, did not directly discriminate against Catholics it is pivotal to the narrative of Protestantism in England and its development. The first real attack came in 1538 under Cardinal Wolsey’s successor, Thomas Cromwell.

The Pilgrimage of Grace, as the multiple northern risings came to be known, was in essence a huge popular demonstration of disgust against the reformation. It was a disgust which contained many different elements. There was for example the gathering indignation of the great northern lords who found their historic independence threatened by Cromwell’s new central organisation. Above all there were those who deeply resented the religious changes imposed from the centre, they hated Thomas Cranmer, the new Archbishop of Canterbury who declared Catherine of Aragon’s marriage to be against God’s law, they loathed the new bible and wanted their old customs back. In particular the forcible dissolution of the monasteries by the King’s commissioners was a highly visible operation affecting the whole community structure, provided focus for such widespread discontent. As the reformation took hold the King’s new ‘low born’ councillors turned their attention towards the ‘little and small abbeys, priories, and other religious houses of monks, canons, and nuns’, which were full of ‘sin, vicious, carnal and abominable living’.<sup>6</sup> The dissolution of the monasteries in the late 1530s was one of the most revolutionary events in English history. There were nearly nine hundred religious houses in England, around two hundred and sixty for monks, three hundred for regular canons, one hundred and forty two nunneries and one hundred and eighty three friaries; some twelve thousand people in total. Out of a population of two million seven hundred and fifty thousand, four thousand were monks, three thousand were canons, three thousand were friars while there was two thousand nuns. One adult man in

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<sup>5</sup> Fraser, A, *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (London, 2002), p. 232.

<sup>6</sup> The Suppression of Religious Houses Act 1535 (27 Hen 8 c 28)

fifty was in a religious order.<sup>7</sup> In 1534, Cromwell undertook on behalf of the King an account of the donations, responsibilities and income of the entire ecclesiastical estate of England and Wales, including the monasteries, for the purpose of assessing the Church's taxable value. Some of the reports said that the word of God was not being observed as it should have been and there were allegations of lechery, sodomy and over luxurious living. The Dissolution of the Monasteries provided a means to replenish the treasury and as a result the Crown took possession of monastic lands worth £120,000 a year, the equivalent of £36.9 million as of 2016.<sup>8</sup> Dissatisfaction was greatest in the northern and eastern counties where, away from the influence of London, disapproval of the King's measures was strong and religious sensibilities outraged. Conservatives were appalled to see churches and monastic buildings destroyed, they watched aghast as the King's men broke up images of the Madonna and saints, took axes to stained glass windows and carried away vestments and altar plate to the treasury. The King meant to purge his Church of England of all its superstitious and Catholic features, holy shrines were desecrated, many being exposed as fake and the seeking of miracles was forbidden.

The Pilgrimage of Grace was the first in England that brought together not only religious grievance but it had political and economic dimensions to it as well. The rising began in Lincolnshire when two tax collectors from the King's treasury were captured and brutally murdered on 01 October 1536 when they tried to do their job as the monasteries were being dissolved. The people of the north took out their anger and frustration on these two representatives of the government and soon they numbered 30,000 people. The King responded with contempt and indignation by ordering them to disperse and never again rise up against their King in his 'Answer to Petitions of Traitors and Rebels [in] Lincolnshire'. The King's reply did little to appease the rebels, on the contrary the rising spread like wildfire, including not only the 'rude and ignorant common people' but gentleman and nobles who acted as their leaders. They were led by Robert Aske who marched 40,000 men to York for the restitution of Christ's Church. Singing and carrying Catholic symbols along the route they entered York on 16 October. It was at this time that the divide between reformed and Catholic's became ever more prominent, Catholic's who refused to convert were usually considered to be uneducated, poor and god fearing, and this perception of them would stick over the years and be used in future as a derogatory phrase. The reformed classes who were

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<sup>7</sup> Bernard, G.W., *The Dissolution of the Monasteries*, Volume 96, Issue 324, October 2011, p. 390.

<sup>8</sup> Weir, A, *Henry VIII: King and Court* (London, 2008), p. 393.

mostly aristocratic and looked down upon them as inferior for what they believed as not understanding the true word of God, feared what the Catholic community had in numbers and their rising made them associate Catholics with murder and violence, many of the reformed classes believed the rising was ordered by the Pope himself. The King would have liked to squash the rebellion by force but in a time when communication was slow and there was no standing army he was advised to issue a general pardon on 7 December 1536. That Christmas, Aske attended court in a conciliatory manner where he and the King planned a northern progress the following year. It was not to be, new risings in the north in January 1537 under Sir Francis Bigod and Lord Conyers, unconnected with Aske, gave the excuse for a general policy of repression. Furthermore the King's anger and apprehension were fuelled by the behaviour of the Pope in seeking to support his protestors with aid from abroad. The Pope had created the King's cousin Reginal Pole a cardinal just before Christmas 1536 and he was dispatched to France and Brussels to urge them to take action against Henry VIII. In England, the King ordered the Duke of Norfolk to cause 'dreadful execution' to be done upon a good number of inhabitants of every town that had taken part in the rebellion.<sup>9</sup> The King's response to the Pilgrimage of Grace was swift and brutal and it was the first time since the English Reformation began that such violent action had been taken against Catholics in England for their beliefs. Henry VIII himself was a traditional Catholic in all but name and his creation of the English Church was done so out of a need for divorce and to secure his own authority within England rather than seeking a true reformation. His successor however was wholly Protestant and intended to rid England of Catholicism permanently.

Nothing is more controversial about Edward VI's reign than the Protestant reforms carried forward in his name by Thomas Cranmer. Since birth his education had been dominated by the reformed faction at court and by the time of his succession the same people were in a prime position to make their wishes a reality. During his reign, Cranmer presented a series of religious reforms that transformed the Church of England from one that was essentially Catholic, to one that was wholly Protestant. Edward VI's government in a sense restarted what Henry VIII had begun with the confiscation of church property. Much of the land that was taken was sold off to the nobility who supported religious reform. Although it bought support, it only served to alienate the Catholic population who felt they were at the mercy of Protestant aggressors. The Church of England had to this point taken on a very secular tone even for a religion. As pointed out in the Ordinal of 1550 Bishops, Priests and

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<sup>9</sup> Fraser, A. *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* (London, 2002), p.331 – 337.

other holy men would be appointed by government run appointments under which such men had to meet a certain criteria.<sup>10</sup> The Ordinal was preceded by the Act of Uniformity which had essentially cemented the reformation and most importantly unified the Protestants against ‘popery’. The Act of Uniformity was special in the sense that it guaranteed punishment for those who offended, essentially Catholics who were unlikely to conform and they would ‘suffer imprisonment’.<sup>11</sup> Out of the Act of Uniformity came the Book of Common Prayer which introduced a religious calendar for the new Church along with a daily schedule of service and which reading from the Old and New testaments should be read. Edward VI’s short but definitive reign had a lasting impression on English Protestantism and it is essential to discuss the changes to English life and religion during this period to understand how Protestantism became established and would eventually begin to discriminate against Catholics. By the spring of 1553 the sixteen year monarch contracted tuberculosis leaving the crown to his 38 year old half sister Mary, who would attempt in vain to restore Catholicism to England.

The accession of Mary Tudor to the throne was probably one of the most difficult in English history. Deprived of her hereditary rights, because of her Catholic faith, Mary was supplanted for nine days by Lady Jane Grey, who for her Protestant faith was deemed to be the most responsible choice Edward VI could make on his death bed. In his Devise for the Succession, Edward VI excluded both his sisters on the basis of their illegitimacy.<sup>12</sup> The Devise was certainly directed towards Mary because of her faith. A female successor to Edward VI was distasteful for him to consider in the first place but if a female sovereign had to be chosen then at least it would be a Protestant one. The motive behind the devise has been disputed as to the real reasons for its implementation including that Mary Tudor and the Duke of Northumberland had never gotten along and that Mary was related to the Spanish Emperor but it is generally concluded that Edward VI himself pushed through the devise because of his religious convictions.<sup>13</sup> The Duke of Northumberland’s regime had seriously undermined Mary’s conservative lure to the English masses, many of whom regarded her as Henry VIII’s only legitimate child. Although Edward VI went to extensive lengths to dissuade his people from Catholicism and even re-set the succession to do so, it was his fervently Catholic sister Mary who would cement the reformation. During her reign Mary I burned at the stake over

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<sup>10</sup> Ordinal (1550).

<sup>11</sup> The Act of Uniformity 1548 (2 & 3 Edw 6 c 1)

<sup>12</sup> Devise for the Succession

<sup>13</sup> Edwards, J, *Mary I: England’s Catholic Queen* (Yale University Press, 2011), p. 76 – 79.

three hundred Protestants while many more fled to Germany to escape persecution. After many years of personal turmoil Mary I's faith, she believed had saved by staying true to the Catholic faith and that her accession was divine providence. Under the guidance of Cardinal Pole she believed it was her duty to save England from Protestantism and 'to compel her subjects to do likewise'. Initially her reign was extremely successful, gaining many notable victories, in propaganda at least. The first was the public confession and conversion of the Duke of Northumberland, who from the scaffold acknowledged England's ruin to its reformation sixteen years beforehand and his own corruption to his own heresy.<sup>14</sup> The Marian government however failed to use such devices of propaganda to their own advantage especially in the case of Thomas Cranmer. The decision to burn him was certainly one of Mary I's own given the personal hand he had taken in her unhappy life. He had publicly renounced the reformation several times but she was determined that he should die a heretic and in doing so robbed the Marian counter – reformation of its most spectacular trophy convert. Having lost all integrity in his conversion the 66 year old tried to salvage his dignity at the last minute and died a courageous death. For her burnings, Mary I was immortalised by John Knox in his book 'The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women' when he described her as 'that cruel monster Mary unworthy, by reason of her bloody tyranny, of the name of a woman'.<sup>15</sup> Secondly in 'Actes and Monuments' by John Foxe in 1563 when he labelled her with the sobriquet of 'Bloody Mary'.<sup>16</sup>

## Chapter Two

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<sup>14</sup> Duffy, Eamon, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England Under Mary Tudor* (New Haven, 2009), p. 88.

<sup>15</sup> Knox, J, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558).

<sup>16</sup> Foxe, J, 'Actes and Monuments' (1563) ([www.johnfoxe.org](http://www.johnfoxe.org)).

## The Elizabethan Settlement & Gunpowder Plot

*'I would be glad to have both their heads and their bodies separated from this whole island and transported beyond the seas'*

James VI to Robert Cecil.<sup>17</sup>

It was the works such as these by Knox and Foxe that encouraged a hatred towards Catholics in England and even more so after the accession of Elizabeth I and her religious settlement of 1559. Foxe's 'Actes and Monuments' is considered one of the most important texts in the Anglican Church and is seen as the real beginning of anti – Catholic sentiment in England. The original book helped to frame English consciousness nationally, religiously and historically. By signifying images of the sixteenth-century martyred Protestants under Mary I, Elizabeth's golden age and the Spanish Armada's defeated in later editions, Foxe's text and its images served as a popular and academic code. It forewarned English people to the threat in harbouring citizens who bore allegiance to foreign powers, and it laid the foundation stones for their xenophobia. In her religious settlement, Elizabeth I again broke England away from Rome and re-established Edward VI's common prayer book enshrined in the new Act of Uniformity 1559. During the first decade of her reign Elizabeth I was reluctant to enforce her religious laws too vigorously, she was aware that Protestant England was stuck in between Catholic France and Spain were the counter – reformation was still persecuting thousands of Protestants and secondly because under both Protestant and Catholic law she was considered illegitimate and that by right the throne belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots who already had a son.<sup>18</sup> Mary Stuart would prove to be one of the greatest rallying points for Catholics in England throughout most of Elizabeth I reign. The threat posed by Mary, Queen of Scots was not purely religious but it was also centred on gender and the prospect of a feminine succession to a Catholic woman was a frightening one to English statesmen. In response to this threat the Elizabethan government undertook a long campaign to discredit Mary, Queen of Scots and with her the Catholic faith. In doing so it transformed the character of English anti-Catholicism. As Carol Weiner wrote in her study of anti – Catholicism in England during this period, hatred towards Catholics changed from being the 'private obsession of religious extremists...into part of the national ideology'.<sup>19</sup> During the nineteen

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<sup>17</sup> Fraser, A, 'The Gunpowder Plot: Terror and Faith in 1605' (London, 2002), p. 46.

<sup>18</sup> Childs, J, *God's Traitor: Terror & Faith in Elizabethan England* (London, 2014), p. 22 – 24.

<sup>19</sup> Weiner, C. Z., 'The Beleaguered Isle: A Study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti – Catholicism' Past and Present 51 (1971), p. 27 – 62.

years in which Mary, Queen of Scots was imprisoned in England after the coup d'état in Scotland by Protestant lords forced her to abdicate several key events took place that furthered the Elizabethan campaign included Elizabeth I's excommunication in 1570 and the rebellion of the northern Earls in 1569. The Papal Bull did nothing only further the hatred towards Catholic's who Protestants felt had a foreign allegiance and would actively try to replace the Queen now with the Pope's blessing. Furthermore the Papal Bull released all Catholic's in England from their allegiance to Elizabeth I which only served to single them out as non-conformists and enemies of the state. The rebellion itself seemed to have the Popes blessing however the Papal Bull was only issued after the rebellion had taken place but the damage was done and it made Catholic's in the north look militant as if they were taking orders from the Pope. Thirdly, the assassination of the Earl of Moray, Mary Stuart's half – illegitimate but Protestant brother in 1570 squashed all hopes of uniting the two kingdoms under a Protestant union and therefore nullifying Mary Stuart's rightful claim. With his death the Elizabethan government had to distinguish between these two queens and used their gender to do so. The virginal Elizabeth was portrayed to be godly, wedded to both Protestantism and God whilst always protecting her nation yet Mary Stuart's Catholicism meant that she was associated with, and therefore the Catholic Church was associated with tyranny, war, treason, the pope and the antichrist which only inspired fear and hatred among the Protestant population of England.<sup>20</sup> The image of Mary Stuart as treasonous was confirmed by her association with the Babbington Plot in which she actively tried to have Elizabeth I assassinated. Through her secret correspondence with Jesuit priests and other Catholic sympathisers from Spain, Mary endorsed the conspirators to rescue her and assassinate Elizabeth I<sup>21</sup>. Her letters were deciphered by Sir Francis Walsingham and the whole plot was uncovered leading to her execution on 8 February 1587 at Fortheringhay Castle.<sup>22</sup> Mary Stuart's execution justified Spain's planned invasion of England and depose Elizabeth I and restore Catholicism but the mission had an unfortunate end when the Armada sank in the English Channel.<sup>23</sup> Under such circumstances, Catholic's increasingly became the problem, they were not to be trusted and were always suspects in every situation – according to the Protestant perspective at least. Although they were the minority in England the Elizabethan government forged a siege mentality that although they were a minority in

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<sup>20</sup> McLaren, A, 'Gender, Religion and Early Modern Nationalism: Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots and the Genesis of English Anti – Catholicism', *American Historical Review* (June, 2002), p. 739 – 746.

<sup>21</sup> Fraser, A, 'Mary, Queen of Scots' (London, 1994), p.487 – 488.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, p. 534.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 550.

England they had greater support in Europe and as such life was made even more difficult for non – conformists. From 1577 until the end of her reign, Elizabeth I's government executed Catholic's, priests and Jesuits among others. The Catholic laity's refusal to tolerate occasional attendance at Protestant services that they did not believe in presented the choice to Catholics more frankly. The arrival of the seminary priests, which for some was a welcomed relief, brought only trouble for others. The Elizabethan government took steps to curtail Catholicism by fining those who refused to attend church charging them from 12 d. per service to £20 a month. It was now treason to be absolved from schism and to be reconciled with Rome. As a consequence the execution of priests and Jesuits started in 1577, four more in 1581, up to eleven in 1582, two in 1583, six in 1584, fifty-three by 1590, and seventy more between 1601 and 1608. It became treasonable for a Catholic priest ordained abroad to come into England and because the papacy had called for the deposing of the Queen, the choice for moderate Catholics lay between treason and damnation.<sup>24</sup>

Following the death of Elizabeth I, many Catholic's in England rejoiced at the fact that she would be succeeded by James VI of Scotland, whose Catholic mother, Mary Stuart, had been executed for her faith. Many Jesuits, priests and Catholic laity celebrated that their new sovereign would be more lenient towards them. In his personal views James VI considered the Catholic Church to be the mother church albeit hugely corrupted. Having being brought up along the strictest guidelines of Calvinism James VI was genuinely tolerant towards Catholic's so long as his personal power was not jeopardised by their numbers which he feared would on grow in size.<sup>25</sup> His toleration however did not go far enough to appease Catholic living conditions and as a result it led to the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

The first manifestation of the Gunpowder Plot came after it became apparent the James VI would only be tolerant towards Catholic's yet not restore the old religion. Dissatisfied with the lack of change, Father's William Clarke and William Watson planned to hold the King in the Tower of London until he granted their wishes of greater tolerance and the councillors of state who were particularly associated with Catholic persecution such as Cecil were to be removed from office. The plot would involve, as they always do, replacing the Protestant sovereign with a Catholic one namely Lady Arabella Stuart who was known for her Catholic sympathies. The plot, however, was uncovered and all were arrested only to be reprieved by James at the last moment, except for Watson and Clarke who were brutally

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<sup>24</sup> Haigh, C. *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford, 1993), p. 262.

<sup>25</sup> Fraser, A, *The Gunpowder Plot: Terror and Faith in 1605* (London, 2002), p. 18.

executed. The plot did not have the support of the general public especially Catholic's who considered it to be irresponsible and criminally reckless. Catholic's at this point wanted to achieve tolerance through peacefully means as directed by the Pope, this sentiment was captured by Father Garnet who called the Bye Plot 'a piece of imprudent folly, for we know that it is by peaceful means that his holiness and other princes are prepared to help us'.<sup>26</sup> Their aim of the Papacy was to entice James VI into Catholicism and for the mean time Catholic's should be obedient and peaceful. So desirous were the Catholic's in England to maintain peace that the plot was reported to the council by Father Garnet, a well-known Catholic. James VI was so grateful for the loyalty shown by his Catholic subjects that he had all fines for non – conformists pardoned for one year.

This tolerant sentiment was not to last and the first sign of James' antipathy towards Catholicism came with his first State Opening of Parliament on 31 January 1604 in which he openly attacked the old religion and announced his 'utter detestation' for the papist religion.<sup>27</sup> On 31 March 1604, James' again commented on the religious question when he said he wanted peace among his people under the true religion yet he made his remarks in a conciliatory fashion saying that 'I would be sorry to punish their bodies for the error in their minds'. This particular sentence highlights how James' himself viewed Catholics as inferior and uneducated for in his view if they were not either of these things they would conform. It was from this point onwards that James' concerned himself with the Catholic issue, his first issue was the population of Catholic's in England at this time which came to around 38,000. He warned the Protestant bishops to be 'careful, diligent and vigilant than you have been before to win souls to God... where you have been in any way sluggish before, now waken yourselves up again with a new diligence in this point'. This new direction of opinion by the King was certainly responsible for the renewed persecution of Catholic's. The Puritans in England would happily have attacked or murdered Catholic's without the King's consent yet his remarks confirmed to them that they were supported. A Father Tesimond wrote that the very promises on which the Catholics had built their expectations were destroyed when the King 'protested most vehemently that he would take it as an extreme insult if anyone imagined that either then or at any time in the past, he had entertained the slightest intention of tolerating their religion'. Shortly afterwards on 24 April, a bill was passed through the Houses of Parliament outlawing every Catholic in England. As a result, according the Lord

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<sup>26</sup> Fraser, A, 'The Gunpowder Plot: Terror and Faith in 1605' (London, 2002), p, 77.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 100 – 102.

Chief Justice Popham the Gunpowder Plot was 'set on foot as the only means to relieve that party'. Both having been spurred on by intolerance and hatred.<sup>28</sup>

The plan was designed by Robert Catesby of Northamptonshire, by whose personal charm and magnetism brought many to his cause. Catesby had previously rebelled against Elizabeth I in 1601 but having been left off with a heavy fine he went to Philip III of Spain to petition for the assistance of Catholic's in England but was unsuccessful. Having failed in all previous attempts of religious liberation, Catesby gathered together a flock of Catholic supporters including one Guy Fawkes to kill the King, his ministers and a proportion of the Protestant Aristocracy. The first meeting between the conspirators took place on 20 May 1604 at the Duck and Drake Inn. Catesby, Thomas Wintour, and John Wright were in attendance and were joined by Guy Fawkes and Thomas Percy. Together in a private room, the five plotters swore an oath of secrecy on a prayer book.<sup>29</sup> They planned to plant barrels of gunpowder underneath the House of Lords while the King opened parliament when government reconvened. Parliament would take its summer recess on 7 July and not return until the following February when the plot would take place. During this time the conspirators made their arrangements planting several barrels of gunpowder underneath the lord's chamber. Between the adjournment of parliament and the date of the planned explosion, the Jacobean government further exasperated Catholic's in England with discrimination. In mid-September the King issued a commission to his privy councillors to 'exterminate' Jesuits, priest and 'divers other corrupt persons employed under the colour of religion' to withdraw his subjects from their allegiance. Recusancy fines were back in place and with an even more vigorous tone to them with tax collectors looking for the unpaid fines of 1603 of which all Catholics were pardoned from. Simultaneously, the peace treaty with Spain brought no toleration for Catholics in its terms and conditions only ceremonial banquets. Around the same time as the Anglo – Spanish Treaty, plague broke out in London and parliament was postponed until 5 November 1605. By October, all plans had been confirmed with 36 barrels of gunpowder hidden beneath the House of Lords and even more conspirators added to the list. At the last moment, the plot was discovered by Lord Monteagle, whose brother-in-law was among the conspirators and had planned to attend the opening of parliament. Now known as the Monteagle letter it warned him not to attend parliament 'for God and man hath concurred to punish the wickedness of this time' and yet

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<sup>28</sup> Fraser, A, 'The Gunpowder Plot: Terror and Faith in 1605' (London, 2002), p. 106 – 108.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 117.

‘for though there be no appearance of any stir, yet I say they shall receive a terrible blow this Parliament’.<sup>30</sup> Armed with this letter Monteagle brought it to the attention of Robert Cecil, James’ first minister, who in turn passed it onto the King who became anxious over the use of word ‘blow’ in the text and possibly fearing his own father’s faith who was murdered in an explosion in 1567 suspected the same faith for himself had the undercroft of the House of Lords searched thoroughly. On the evening of 4 November a royal official, Sir Thomas Knyvett, and Edward Doubleday found Guy Fawkes, who was using the alias John Johnson, and his gunpowder. Fawkes was arrested and tortured. While he was detained for information he revealed his plan and fellow conspirators. All conspirators were subsequently executed for treason but their plot created an even greater wave of intolerance and hatred towards Catholics in England.

This period of English history the nation that emerged between the reigns of Elizabeth I and James VI was xenophobic and anti – Catholic. After 44 years under a Protestant queen sectarian attitudes flourished and it began to be the norm to treat Catholic’s as second class citizens and it set a precedence for the next century. Under her reign, England prospered and compared to the time of Mary I, Protestant’s took this as divine providence that God was happy that England had reformed. Especially when the Spanish Armada was defeated they assured themselves that God had “blew with his wind and they were scattered” and therefore God was happy with the new religious arrangement in England.<sup>31</sup> Catholicism was now treasonous and the pope was viewed as the anti - Christ. In the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, Catholics experienced even more persecution under the Jacobean government. It had, in their eyes, confirmed their suspicions of Catholics and that ever one was capable of treason. As a result fines and restrictions were introduced, similar to those of Elizabeth I along with an Oath of Allegiance requiring all Catholics to renounce their religion, all of which was enacted under the Popish Recusants Act.<sup>32</sup> The discovery of the plot was widely celebrated by Protestants and Puritans alike throughout England marking the occasion with the Observance of 5th November Act which was a bill of thanksgiving that became an annual observance in England to this very day although the act itself was repealed in 1859.<sup>33</sup> Within a few decades Gunpowder Plot Day, as it was known, became a predominantly English

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<sup>30</sup> *Letter to Lord Monteagle*, 26 October 1605

<sup>31</sup> Childs, J, *God’s Traitor: Terror & Faith in Elizabethan England* (London, 2014), p. 163.

<sup>32</sup> *Popish Recusants Act*, 3 Jac.1, c. 4, (1605).

<sup>33</sup> *Observance of 5th November Act*, 3 Ja. I, c. 1, (1605) Parliament UK (<http://www.parliament.uk/>).

anniversary, but as it carried strong Protestant religious overtones it also became a focus for anti-Catholic sentiment.

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Civil War, the Great Fire & the Glorious Revolution**

*'This is a righteous judgement of God upon these barbarous wretches'*

Throughout James VI reign and into that of his son, Charles I these anti – Catholic laws remained in place becoming more intense and intolerable making the lives of Catholics extremely difficult. It is self – evident from such laws that the governments of both Elizabeth I and James I had implemented them to eradicate Catholicism simply by making their lives unbearable. The popular prejudice against Catholics was demonstrated when the French embassy was attacked on 26 October 1623 while a priest was speaking to a congregation of 400 people of which 90 people were killed when the floor collapsed into the basement. Many Protestants felt no remorse, even going as far as believing it was a direct punishment from God for being Catholic in the first place and the Bishop of London refused to let any of the dead to be buried in the city's church yards. Perhaps from the dominant influence of his Catholic wife, Charles I was suspected of having Catholic sympathies. In 1629, he granted Catholics the right to worship under the terms of his treaty with Catholic France much to the dismay of his Protestants councillors. Much of Charles I reign was spent trying to thread the middle ground between his French queen and his Anglican court until civil war led to his execution and the protectorate period of English history. Under the control the Puritanical Oliver Cromwell, Catholics especially in Ireland where Cromwell essentially committed war crimes, as would be considered nowadays as well as mass genocide.

During the Civil War in England much of Ireland had been re-taken by the Irish Catholic Confederacy much to the relief of the Irish population who could once again prosper and practice their chosen faith in peace which is only right by today's standards. However, from Cromwell's point of view his mission was more than just reclaiming an English colony but one of divine providence and like many before him God's 'perceived' wishes were now being invoked into all military and legislative actions to justify any activities which may be viewed as severe. Before setting out for Dublin in Bristol, Cromwell told his men that they were Israelites about to extirpate the idolatrous inhabitants of Canaan. Although many English sovereign's had in past tried to conquer Ireland it had never truly been successful. The Irish were steadfast in their determination that they were a separate and independent nation with their own customs and religion. For Cromwell however, when he marched on Drogheda to defeat the Confederate Army he believed that he was crusading against a priest – ridden, drunken, barbarous and vicious bunch of men. At Drogheda for example, Cromwell, burned and murdered between two and four thousand people. Afterwards, Cromwell reported

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<sup>34</sup> Fraser, A, 'Cromwell: Our Chief of Men', (London, 2002), p. 423.

to Parliament that their battle had been successful because he was ‘persuaded that this is a righteous judgement of God upon these barbarous wretches, who have imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood, that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future, which are satisfactory grounds to such actions, which otherwise cannot but work remorse and regret’.<sup>35</sup> For Cromwell, it is clear that his mission was to destroy all Catholic power in Ireland and subjugate those people as they had been in England since the Elizabethan Settlement. His personal hatred from Catholicism can be seen in his counter reply to the Declaration of Irish Bishops made on 4 December in which he attacked the Irish for rebelling against their lawful masters, for reclaiming land which had been fairly bought off their ancestors and that all Ireland had been led astray by priests who defy the law, he ended by writing that this was a ‘righteous cause’.<sup>36</sup>

In total, about 618,000 people out of a population of 1.5 million died during Cromwell’s campaign which is equal to 41%.<sup>37</sup> Following a successful campaign the system of plantations were reintroduced to retain a firm control of Ireland that would see Catholics languish in disrespect and poverty for over 200 hundreds until the venerable Daniel O’Connell achieved emancipation in 1829.<sup>38</sup> In England his policies were much the same, historian’s such as Antonia Fraser point out that Cromwell kept Catholic friends in private often enjoying their company, even illustrating how under his protectorate conversions to Catholicism rose from 78 in 1650 to 416 in 1655.<sup>39</sup> This statistic however shows us nothing more than it did under previous administrations where leaders were only tolerating Catholic’s so long as they were law abiding, as these numbers of conversions rose Cromwell introduced a bill against Jesuit priests in April 1655. Among the Catholic community, Cromwell was and still is considered a hate figure while Puritans and Protestant’s praise him for his determination to remove Catholicism altogether. As a result Catholic’s looked to his possible successor Charles II as a more amiable leader.

After the death of Oliver Cromwell on 3 September 1658, his son Richard succeeded him without the general consent of either parliament or the army.<sup>40</sup> For many months there was an uncertainty in England that was similar to the situation before the Civil War where

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<sup>35</sup> Fraser, A, *‘Cromwell: Our Chief of Men’*, (London, 2002), p. 422 – 423.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 437 – 438.

<sup>37</sup> *‘How many died during Cromwell’s campaign?’* in *Confederate War and Cromwell* (2013) (<http://www.historyireland.com/cromwell/how-many-died-during-cromwells-campaign/>) (22 May 2016).

<sup>38</sup> Bartlett, T, *‘Ireland: a history’* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 264.

<sup>39</sup> Fraser, A, *‘Cromwell: Our Chief of Men’*, (London, 2002), p. 614.

<sup>40</sup> Fraser, A, *‘Cromwell: Our Chief of Men’*, (London, 2002), p. 848.

many thought there would be another. Since Cromwell's death and his son's exile several military men vied for the office of Lord Protector. The situation was neutralised by the Declaration of Breda by Charles II in exile at The Hague. In this text, Charles promised to give a general pardon for crimes committed during the English Civil War and the Interregnum for all those who recognised Charles as the lawful king, current owners of property purchased during the same period could keep their land, religious toleration which appealed to Catholics and the payment of arrears to members of the army which would be recommissioned into service under the crown.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately for Catholic's the situation only deteriorated even further in a downward spiral that would culminate in the Glorious Revolution. Under the Clarendon Code, Charles' government which was hugely royalist and Anglican sought to discourage Catholicism and Puritanism. With the enactment of the Conventicle Act 1664 five people or more of a religion other than Anglican were forbidden from congregating.<sup>42</sup> The Five Mile Act made it illegal for Catholic's to come within five miles of incorporated towns or villages as well as being forbidden to teach in schools.<sup>43</sup> Finally the Act of Uniformity 1662 and the Corporation Act 1661 made all clergymen preach from the Book of Common Prayer while the latter act excluded Catholics from public office.<sup>44</sup> <sup>45</sup> Collectively these laws became known as the Penal Laws. These types of legislation is some of the most discriminatory on record against Catholics and was enacted by an overly prejudicial parliament that inflicted years of suffering upon a sizable amount of the English population based entirely on their religion.

Their problems were exasperated by the Great Fire of London which destroyed 13, 200 buildings that housed between 70, 000 to 80, 000 people. The Great Fire started at the bakery of Thomas Farriner on Pudding Lane shortly after midnight on Sunday, 2 September 1666 and spread rapidly west across the City of London.<sup>46</sup> Still largely a medieval city, most of the houses and establishments were made of wood including St. Paul's Cathedral which was destroyed. This factor greatly added to the fire spreading so quickly and engulfing the city. Apart from death and destruction, it displaced thousands of people who naturally looked for a culprit to blame the atrocities on. Given the prejudicial and discriminatory temperament

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<sup>41</sup> 'Declaration of Breda' in *Journal of the House of Lords: Volume 11, 1660-1666* (London, 1767-1830), pp. 6-9. British History Online (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/lords-jrnl/vol11/pp6-9>) (22 May 2016).

<sup>42</sup> Conventicle Act, 16 Cha. II c. 4, (1664).

<sup>43</sup> *Five Mile Act*, 17 Cha II c. 2, (1665).

<sup>44</sup> *Corporation Act*, 13 Cha. II. St. 2 c. 1, (1661).

<sup>45</sup> *Act of Uniformity*, 14 Cha II c 4, (1662).

<sup>46</sup> Tinniswood, A, 'By Permission of Heaven: The Story of the Great Fire of London' (London, 2003), p. 40 – 41.

of Anglican's against Catholics at this time, a majority of them assumed Catholics were responsible leading to mobs and lynching. Suspicions first arose when several suspects were handed over to the Duke of York for questioning and never seen again. The Duke was long suspected of being a secret Catholic and would later admit to being one among much controversy. Rumours began to circulate that a Catholic recently employed by the New River Company had turned off the water pipes and taken the keys with him into the countryside as the fire broke out, another rumour was that a Catholic Irishmen visiting his sister in Essex had asked a squire the night before the fire if he had heard of the firing of London and that he would 'see London before it be quite burnt, for I shall never see it more'. There were around 60, 000 Catholics living in England at this time so from the Protestant point of view they were a sizable minority to cause such destruction and they had the support of Catholic France, Spain and the Papacy. Even the King was inclined towards Catholicism, with rumours that he was a secret convert, this rumour got so out of hand that parliament made it an offence to suggest that the King may be Catholic.<sup>47</sup> The connotations of this act imply that to say this would be insulting is derogatory. Charles' mother, sister, wife and brother were all devoutly Catholic and a strongly Anglican parliament would not countenance such accusations on the Prince they restored. Parliament was equally zealous to blame Catholics for the fire and it subsequently became a political shuttlecock back and forth between Protestants and Catholics whenever anti – Catholic feelings ran high in the future. The fire was viewed as terrorism by Protestants, which is self-evident from the plaque erected on Pudding Lane

*'Here by permission of heaven hell broke loose upon this Protestant city from the malicious hearts of barbarous Papists by ye hand of their Agent Hubert, who confessed and on ye Ruines of this place declared the fact, for which he was hanged. That here began that dreadful fire, which is described and perpetuated on and by the neighbouring pillar'.*

- Erected Anno 1681 in the Mayoralite of Sr. Patience Ward, Kt.

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 158 – 159.

Patience Ward was the new Lord Mayor of London and as the plaque implies he paid for its erection. When elected, among other things, he professed his Protestantism and his deep hatred of Catholicism and how there was no doubt in his mind that they were to blame for the Great Fire. His personal zeal for blaming Catholics reflected the times he was in, the Duke of York came out as a Catholic and as heir to the throne no one would dare attack him in either speech or writing. Instead the Anglican community celebrated 'Guy Fawkes night' with even more pomp and splendour with effigies of the Pope being burned.<sup>48</sup>

The threat posed by James, Duke of York succeeding to the English throne brings us to the final section of this narrative. In the summer of 1678 two anti – Catholic agitators, Titus Oates and Israel Tonge, went before a judge in Westminster to reveal a Catholic plot they had uncovered. This plot, would, assassinate the King, place the Duke of York on the throne and kill over 100, 000 Protestants with the support of France and the Papacy. Oates and Tonge were liars and zealous bigots with a hint of religious fanaticism. Their story which they embellished until it implicated even the Duchess of York and the Queen was full of contradictions and inconsistencies. The situation was made worse when the judge appointed to hear their case was found dead in a ditch with his own sword put through him, and so ensued the Popish Plot in England. It is hard for us to understand the irrational fear and loathing with which English Protestants regarded Catholics during the late 1600's. Paranoia spread through London like the flames of the Great Fire where a maid was burned by the mob outside her house for allegedly taking part in the Great Fire, playing cards showed Jesuit priests encouraging other Catholics to burn houses while leaflets were distributed of the Pope spitting fire from his mouth onto the streets of London. Under such increased hatred when another fire broke out in London in January 1679 the Duke of York arrived to reprise his role from the Great Fire when the mob turned on him because of his Catholicism and he was forced to return to Westminster Palace. Anti – Catholic rhetoric had sank to a new and frightening level. After this incident in London many Catholics were blamed for the fire and 35 innocent men were executed for their parts in an imaginary plot. The essence of their hatred was captured by the Swedish lawyer visiting London at this time – William Laurence who wrote approvingly of the Swedish method of deterring Jesuits from any plots or conspiracies. When the Swedes caught a Jesuit priest they arrested him and locked him inside a shed after having stapling his testicles to a block and handed him a knife before setting the shed on fire, the priest therefore had the choice of either cutting himself free or being burned

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<sup>48</sup> Tinniswood, A, 'By Permission of Heaven: The Story of the Great Fire of London' (London, 2003), p. 265.

alive – his story garnered the reply ‘thus the Swedes have secured their nation from this vermin and now none of them dare be nibbling there for fear of the trap’. Oates and Tonge’s Popish Plot created a fanatical Protestant epidemic where hating Catholics became part of their identity even more than it ever had been before. All this fanaticism went all the way up to Westminster where a series of bills were passed to appease the growing anti – Catholic fever including confirming that all plots, conspiracies and the Great Fire were all arranged by Catholics and another that discouraging Protestant dissenters only encouraged Catholicism – now it seemed that Puritanism was ok so long as it suppressed Catholicism. Throughout the fury caused by the Great Fire and Popish Plot petitions of loyalty to the King and government of a person’s Protestantism became very popular. One such group sent an expression of their abhorrence of Catholicism and ‘all its bloody traitorous practices’ and that London had been burned down by ‘papists, Jesuits and Tories’.<sup>49</sup> However, such petitions to the sovereign would stop when Charles II died childless on 6 February 1685, leaving the throne to his younger, Catholic brother James.

Initially, James II reign began with a smooth succession with many people celebrating his accession. Two uprisings with strong Protestant support created some problems for James yet he was able to rely on the support of his Loyal Parliament and the army which suppressed both. Yet when James’ behaviour became increasingly absolutist, similar to that of his father, Charles I, he lost the support of his ministers and the people when he began to voice his religious views. Unlike Charles II, James was an avowed Catholic who, to the consternation of many Protestants began to support Catholics through legislation. Initial support for the king receded as it became clear that he wished to secure not only freedom of worship for Catholics, but also the removal of the penal laws so that Catholics could once again occupy public office. Apprehension over the king’s appointment of Catholic officers to the army forced him to prorogue parliament on 20 November 1685. The further James’ pushed his policies the more unpopular he became and so encountered opposition from statesmen and bishops alike. Undeterred James used his royal prerogative to form a party of Catholics, non-conformists and dissenters to counterweight the power of the Tories who had previously supported him. James’ tactics did nothing but distance himself from the people and parliament. Without the support of parliament he attempted to use his royal powers to

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<sup>49</sup> Tinniswood, A, ‘By Permission of Heaven: The Story of the Great Fire of London’ (London, 2003), p. 266 – 270.

dispense with government legislation, namely the penal laws.<sup>50</sup> He issued a strongly worded Declaration of Indulgence in 1687, which forbade any reprisals against Catholics and Protestant nonconformists who did not adhere to the Church of England.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, he ordered his bishops to read this document in their churches. When Archbishop Sancroft joined with several other prominent bishops in refusing to read this declaration to their parishioners, James had them imprisoned in the Tower of London. The public and the ruling classes were outraged and the bishops were freed. To protect himself James' sought security by creating a large standing army which was not a common practise in England and it alarmed many Protestants at court. It clear from the start of his accession that James wanted a full Catholic restoration in England but was too zealous and over – ambitious to thread the middle ground and by not doing so frightened many Protestants and backed them into retaliation. The most likely situation in England at this time was to tolerate James and his Catholic tendencies because the succession was secured in his Protestant daughters, Mary and Anne. Similar to the reign of Mary I, many Protestants in England just waited for the succession of the Protestant heir. These hopes were dashed when James' second wife, Mary of Modena, gave birth to a son on 10 June 1688. Now it seemed as though there would be a whole dynasty of Catholic Stuart Kings on the throne. From the perspective of prominent Protestants this simply could not be tolerated. Plots and plans to prevent this situation had to be found.

By the time the Queen had given birth to Prince James, Protestant conspirators at court had already made contact with William III, the Dutch Stadholder. William III was James' nephew and his eldest daughter's husband, he was strictly Protestant and had a deep seated hatred for King Louis XIV of France who had only recently begun to persecute Protestants in his own kingdom. Aside from being James' son – in – law, William III, was also in the line of succession by right so he became the obvious choice to lead a rebellion against James'. The Immortal Seven, as they became known, wrote a letter to William III in June 1688 imploring him to invade England and depose James II because, they claimed, his newly born son was an imposter brought in to secure a Catholic succession and to restore the right and liberties of Englishmen who 'are so generally dissatisfied with the present conduct

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<sup>50</sup> 'The Glorious Revolution' BBC History  
([http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil\\_war\\_revolution/glorious\\_revolution\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil_war_revolution/glorious_revolution_01.shtml)) (25/05/16).

<sup>51</sup> 'Declaration of Indulgence of King James II' The Jacobite Heritage  
(<http://www.jacobite.ca/documents/16870404.htm>) (24/05/16).

of the government in relation to their religion, liberties and properties'.<sup>52</sup> Initially fearful of being unsuccessful when promised of the support of the Immortal Seven and their supporters William agreed to invade landing in England on 5 November 1688. Although William claimed he would invade to save England and the religion, his motives were far more strategic. French aggression had reached a new high and the recent Anglo – French agreement created a detrimental situation for William's Dutch republic. It is therefore far more plausible that Williams plan was to secure an English government and sovereign that would be far more partisan to Dutch interests. Although James' force were far superior he refused reinforcements from France and believed that he would easily defeat William's army. However James' was wrong count on the support of his army and indeed the inferiority of William's. Altogether Williams forces combined for his invasion were vast, the flotilla comprising of 43 men-of-war, four light frigates and 10 fire ships protected by 400 flyboats capable of carrying 21,000 soldiers. It was four times larger than the Spanish Armada launched in 1588.

Supported in their voyage by the so-called 'Protestant wind' which prevented James' navy from stopping the Dutch fleet, William III landed at Devon on 5 November 1688. The fact that he landed on November 5<sup>th</sup> was coincidental but hugely beneficial in terms of propaganda as it was the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. James' military preparations for his defence over the summer of 1688 brought together an army of about 25,000. Statistically larger than the force brought over by William, James should have won the battle if not for his indecisiveness. News of the William's arrival sparked off waves of anti-Catholic rioting in towns and cities across England and as a result convinced James to leave London and bring out his forces to meet William on the field. Gradually, though all of James' leading offices and generals deserted him for William and as a result James made his first attempt to escape, but was captured in Kent. The final betrayal came for James' on the 26 November when he discovered that his daughter, Princess Anne had also fled to join the William. James now announced that he was willing to agree to William's main demand - to call a 'free' parliament. However, by this stage the king feared for his own life and was planning to escape. On 11 December, in the wake of renewed anti-Catholic rioting in London, James made his first attempt to escape. The king's capture was an inconvenience for William, who was now looked upon as the only individual capable of restoring order to the

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<sup>52</sup> 'Letter of invitation to William of Orange, 1688'  
(<http://faculty.history.wisc.edu/sommerville/351/Willinvite.html>) (25/05/16).

country, and on 23 December, with the Williams involvement, James successfully fled the country.<sup>53</sup>

Now that James' had fled and essentially abdicated the throne by throwing his Great Seal of Office into the Thames the 'convention parliament', made up of members from Charles II's last parliament, convened on 22 January 1689 to appoint William as co – monarch with James' daughter Mary, rather than act merely as her consort, and on 13 February William and Mary formally accepted the throne. Before they were offered the crown, William and Mary gave royal assent to a document called the Declaration of Rights, later enshrined in law as the Bill of Rights, which acknowledged a number of constitutional principles, such as the illegality of prerogative suspending and dispensing powers, the prohibition of taxation without parliamentary consent and the need for regular parliaments.<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusion

The fear of Catholicism in England was one of gradually intolerance and hatred. After various administrations between pro and anti-Catholic governments over a period of 200 years the English people became accustomed to discriminating against the Catholic minority.

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<sup>53</sup> The Glorious Revolution' BBC History  
([http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil\\_war\\_revolution/glorious\\_revolution\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil_war_revolution/glorious_revolution_01.shtml)) (25/05/16).

<sup>54</sup> The Avalon Project, '*An Act Declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject and Settling the Succession of the Crown*' Lillian Goldman Law Library Yale Law School.

The treatment received by Catholic cannot be justified, the various plots and conspiracies arranged by Catholics were ones of liberation hoping for freedom of conscience. Under such legislation, life had become unbearable and it was crucial that they obtained some relief. Catholics were condemned for their attempts at liberty yet the Glorious Revolution was celebrated for saving the Anglican religion and suppressing Catholicism. Unfortunately anti – Catholicism had become part of the English psyche and indeed that of Britain’s after the union.

It was not until Catholic emancipation in the 1820’s that they got some relief and were allowed among other things to stand for election and public office. As the British Empire grew so did the anti – Catholic mentality that English settlers brought with them to colonies such as Australia, Canada and America when it was under British jurisdiction. Anti – Catholic feeling increased during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries especially during the Irish potato famine when mass emigration led many Irish families settling in England. The anti – Catholic narrative persisted in England as successive administrations marginalised them and in doing so reduced the perceived threat of Catholicism in England. The Act of Settlement 1701 forbade any Catholic for ever sitting upon the English throne.<sup>55</sup> While the Royal Marriages Act stopped any member of the royal family from either marrying a Catholic or having a spouse that later became Catholic, if they did they would be removed from the succession.<sup>56</sup> Such extensive measures were taken to ensure a Catholic never again sat on the English throne and was therefore blocked from power which shows how intolerant they were.

The Royal Marriages Act has been largely reformed but only as of 2013 while the Act of Settlement is still in force today. In 2010 the Guardian newspaper challenged the act going to the Court of Human Rights claiming that it went against human rights.<sup>57</sup> Although the Perth Agreement reformed the laws of succession, the six most senior members of the royal family must remain in communion with the Anglican Church to retain their place in the line of succession. Had English identity truly changed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century such acts would no longer be necessary and by maintaining them only reinforces the anti – Catholic identity of the English.

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<sup>55</sup> Act of Settlement, 1700 (12 and 13 Will 3 c. 2).

<sup>56</sup> Royal Marriages Act, 1772 (12 Geo 3 c. 11).

<sup>57</sup> The Guardian, 06 Dec 2010.

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