

as “ ‘supreme governor of this realm’ in all spiritual, ecclesiastical and temporal matters.” (*Elizabethan Settlement*, 2015). The author further states that the act also included the imposition of an oath of obedience to the Crown on all clergy and public officials.

Benefits of the Elizabethan Settlement

1. Elizabeth used her royal authority to enact religious legislations for the church.
2. She protected the church by preventing Parliament from meddling with the affairs of the church.
3. The 1552 version of the Book of Common Prayer was amended and reissued under the 1559 Act of Uniformity. This edition now became known as the 1559 Prayer Book.
4. She reinstated the use of vestments (e.g. cope, alb) and church furnishings, which were banned under Edward VI, when Protestantism took over.
5. Elizabeth deleted the Black Rubric from the Prayer book, and so the adoration of the real presence when kneeling at communion was re-introduced.
6. The litany of petition was amended, in which prayers for deliverance from the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome was dropped, as it was deemed offensive to Elizabeth’s Roman Catholic’s subject.
7. Apostolic succession was strongly upheld, in the Church of England. This Elizabeth I ensured happened via the consecration of Matthew Parker as Arch Bishop of Canterbury. In doing this, she “ensured that the line of bishops in Apostolic succession was unbroken”.
8. Clerical marriage was permitted, even though Elizabeth I would have preferred clergy persons that were celibate.

“The Elizabethan settlement was foundational for the via media...as through this settlement, the English church was comprehensive and inclusive, catholic and protestant, but neither Roman Catholic nor Genevan” (*Elizabethan Settlement*, 2015), and this was what further triggered the final break with Rome.

Final Break with The Church of England

In 1570 Pope Pius V excommunicated Eliza-

beth. **That meant that England would remain broken from the Catholic Church, and that Catholics were to oppose Elizabeth in any way they could.** (*The History of Parliament*, 2015). However, with her carefully ensuring that Matthew Parker was ordained as Archbishop of Canterbury, by a Catholic Bishop, one can see that this (the break) was only a myth, as **the apostolic succession of bishops in the Church of England was never broken.**

The excommunication of Elizabeth therefore raises two questions:

1. Was Elizabeth seen as a member of the Roman Catholic Church, in order for her to be excommunicated?
2. Which church really broke from which?

Even though the reformers in England wanted change, they never saw themselves as actually breaking from Church of Rome, as **they saw themselves as one holy catholic church.** What they wanted was liberation from papal authority. Pope Pius V, however, in taking this decision caused **a rift in the Church of England, and resulted in Roman Catholic clergies, who were faithful to the Pope opposing the crown.**

As **the Roman Catholics sought to dethrone Elizabeth, by fighting against the kingdom, the Crown fought back by enacting certain laws in Parliament, as well as via persecuting all Roman Catholics living in England.** The Roman Catholic even sent a Spanish Armada to invade England, but because of the patriotism of the people, it was strongly defeated. So, **it was the Roman Catholic Church that actually took the decision to break ties with the Church of England, and this occurred when Elizabeth I was in power.** Therefore, the refusal to grant Henry VIII an annulment of his marriage, is not the true reason for the Roman Church breaking with the Church of England, as is oftentimes said.

References

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The Break of the Roman Catholic Church from the Church of England

Part 2





The Reformation and the Church of England

As we saw in part 1, the need to break with Rome should be considered to be a part of the reformation process, in which certain persons within the Church of England wanted the church to have its own identity, as it once had prior to the middle ages. **The influence of the Roman Church (Papacy) dictating to them in England how the church should be run, appointing bishops without their input and receiving the collections taken in the church was certainly a concern to certain individuals**, such as Thomas Cromwell and even Thomas Cranmer. The role of Thomas Cromwell in encouraging King Henry to apply to the Pope for a divorce, was only a part of the strategic move to break with the papacy.

Thomas Cranmer even wrote a new Book of Common Prayer to replace the one which the Roman Church had mandated for use in the church. **Knowing that King Henry never saw himself or the Church actually breaking with Rome**, he did not present it/ introduce it to King Henry VIII. In fact, what he did was to wait until King Henry VIII had passed in 1547, and the new King was appointed to replace him. This was a great opportunity for the reformers, as the King who ascended the throne in 1547 was Edward VI at nine years of age, and died at age 15 from tuberculosis. During his reign, a vast number of reformation took place within the church as Edward VI was only a child.

Edward's accession to the throne greatly angered Henry's daughter, Mary Tudor, as it was believed by her that it was she who should have inherited the throne. At his death, Mary became Queen of England, and not only did she denounced the position that her father had taken on as the head of the church, but **she also restored the Pope as head of the Church of England, and anyone who defied her authority and rule as queen was put to death.** Consequently, she became known as Bloody Mary.

The Church of England becoming Protestant

Even though King Henry VIII had removed the Pope as head of the Church, he never denounced the doctrines and ceremonies of the Catholic Church. Therefore the Church of England could be considered as the Roman Catholic Church without a pope. Under Edward VI, however, a council which was first led by his uncle Edward Seymour, was actually managing the affairs of the country. Therefore, **persons wanting the reformation to take place in the Church of England, saw this as a great opportunity, to capitalize on ridding the church of any 'Romish' character/ trait that may be present.** Therefore, under Edward's watch, Protestantism was introduced into the Church of England for the first time in the history of England. **Under his rule, clerical celibacy and even Mass at church services were abolished. The new Book of Common Prayer was also introduced, which was crafted by Cranmer, (Archbishop of Canterbury),** one of the main architect driving the reformation process.

The Return of the Church of England to Rome

As the eldest daughter of King Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, **she (Mary Tudor) did so with little and no challenge, in spite of the fact that her half sister had claimed the crown prior to her arriving in London.** When she took over the throne in 1553, from Edward VI, she had a lot of bitterness in her towards her father because of the divorce of her mother, and the ill-treatment which was met out to her by him. As a result it is believed that she ruled the way she did because of this psychological issue, and so she was determined to undo that which her father had done, for the sake of her mother who was a devout Roman Catholic .

Four months after Mary's accession to the throne, Parliament met in order to re-establish the Roman Catholicism in England. In 1554 Mary mar-

ried Philip II of Spain, and as a devout Roman Catholic obtained the restoration of papal supremacy and sanctioned the persecution of Protestants. The number of executions earned her the name 'Bloody Mary'. **She executed persons such as Thomas Cranmer, her half sister, Lady Jane Grey and her husband, and persecuted the protestants, in which their bishops were burnt at the stake.** She was succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth I.

The Elizabethan Settlement

Many religious and political issues were worked out during the reign of Elizabeth 1, who became queen in 1558. According to *Elizabethan Settlement* (2015), this was because religious issues at that time were threatening the stability of England, especially when one bears in mind that England was Protestant under Edward VI (1547-1553) and Roman Catholic under Mary Tudor (1553 to 1558). **So, one can hence appreciate that with her subjects being both Calvinists and Catholics, what she simply did was to find a "midway" between these two extremes, and the outcome of her efforts, contributed greatly to the shaping of Anglicanism.** This is justified by *Elizabethan Settlement* (2015) who asserts that "The Elizabethan Settlement sought to be an inclusive middle course between divergent religious positions in English Christianity, in which much of traditional Catholic faith was retained, but without submission to papal authority." **So, Elizabeth ensured that even though allowance was made for the expression of one's self/belief, (according to their conscience), there must be uniformity of worship.** Therefore, faithful Christians who had different theological views could find a place in the Church of England.

Even though Elizabeth I did not asserted her power to the extreme that Henry did, the act passed in the first year of her reign in 1559 proclaimed her