

But I tell you that I would not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear: I have so behaved myself that under God I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of my subjects. And therefore I am come amongst you, as you see at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live or die amongst you all; to lay down for my God and for my kingdom and for my people, my honor and my blood even in the dust. I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too – and take foul scorn that Parma or any prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm. To the which rather than any dishonor shall grow by me, I myself will venture my royal blood; I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of your virtue in the field. I know that already for your forwardness you have deserved rewards and crowns, and I assure you in the word of a prince you shall not fail of them. In the meantime, my lieutenant general [Leicester] shall be in my stead, than whom never prince commanded a more noble or worthy subject. Not doubting but by your concord in the camp and valor in the field and your obedience to myself and my general, we shall shortly have a famous victory over these enemies of my God and of my kingdom.

### Between Jesuits and Puritans

#### 4.10 *William Allen on the martyrdom of Fr. William Filby of Oxford (1582)*<sup>13</sup>

The Royal Navy and the wind, if not God, disposed of the Spanish at sea, while at home Elizabeth's government sent would-be Catholic conspirators to the unhealthy fenland prison of Wisbech. Nevertheless, as we have seen, Philip II's plans were all the more alarming because Catholicism had revived from the 1570s. By the 1580s, the Jesuits were sending missionary priests into England, trained at colleges at Douai and Rome; many of those priests became involved in the plots against Elizabeth noted previously. The government, which had already prohibited asserting papal authority in England (1563) and importing papal bulls and other instruments from Rome (1571), now outlawed Catholic missionary work (1581), and made all Jesuits in England felonious (1585). The number of Catholic priests executed during Elizabeth's last decades approached that of the Protestants burned under Mary. The account of priestly martyrdom given by William, Cardinal Allen (1532–94) prompted several responses, including one by Lord Treasurer William (Cecil), Lord Burghley (1520/1–98) himself. Why might the English

<sup>13</sup> [W. Allen], *A Briefe Historie of the Glorious Martyrdom of XII Reverend Priests, executed within these twelvemonthes for confession and defence of the Catholike faith* (n.p. [Rheims?], 1582), 58–9.

government be so concerned about Allen's publication of the dying words of Fr. Filby? Protestants thought foreign-trained priests especially untrustworthy because they had been instructed to use any means, including slippery logic and dissimulation, to advance the Catholic cause. To judge from the exchange below, was the charge fair? What do you suppose was the impact of these executions on those who witnessed them?

On Wednesday being the 30 May these 4 venerable priests [M. William Filby, M. Lucas Kirby, M. Laurence Richardson whose right name was Johnson, and M. Thomas Cottam] were trailed from the Tower of London along the streets to Tyburn, about 7 in the morning, when they were come to the place of execution, William Filby (being the youngest, not above 27 years of age) was first taken from the hurdle, and being lifted into the cart, he blessed himself with the sign of the Cross ..., and so proceeded with these words: Let me see my brethren, looking to the other which lay on the hurdle and there withal holding forth his hands to them, said, Pray for me. Then speaking to the company, said: I am a Catholic, and I protest before almighty God that I am innocent of all these matters, whereof I am condemned, and I hope to be saved by the merits and death of our Savior Jesus Christ, beseeching him to have mercy on me and to forgive me my offences. And therewithal a proclamation was read for keeping the peace, and at the end thereof was said, God save the queen, to which he said, Amen.

The people asking him for what queen he prayed for, he answered, for Queen Elizabeth, beseeching God to send her a long and quiet reign, to his good will, and make her his servant, and preserve her from her enemies. With that M. Topcliff and others willed him to say, God save her from the pope. To whom he answered he is not her enemy, therewith the minister of S. Andrews in Holborn said, Note, that he saith the pope is not the queen's enemy. And then a preacher called Charke [spoke]. Yes, said he, you are a traitor, for you are sworn to the queen's sworn enemy. M. Filby looking aside, said, what do you mean, I never took oath in all my life. What, said Charke, then are you not a priest. You are deceived, said M. Filby, it is a vow and not an oath. After that one of the sheriff's men standing in the cart with M. Filby said unto him, what hast thou there in thy handkerchief, and therewithal taking the handkerchief from him found a little cross of wood with in it, which he holding up in his hands said, O what a villainous traitor is this, that hath a cross, diverse times repeating it, and diverse of the people saying the same. Whereunto M. Filby answered nothing, only smiling at them.

Then the articles, with the preface of the book printed by authority, was read, and his answers unto them. It was replied against him by some urging him further upon the same answer: if you hold this, then you can not be but a traitor to the queen's majesty, for that the pope hath deposed her by his bull. M. Filby said, that that bull was perchance called in again by this Pope Gregory XIII. ... Then sheriff Martine called upon the hangman to dispatch, and the rope being about his neck, the sheriff said, Filby, the queen is merciful unto you, and we

faithful and loving  
for God I have placed my  
will of my subjects. And  
not for my recreation  
battle, to live or die  
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*r. William Filby*

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p. [Rheims?], 1582), 58-9.*

have authority from her to carry you back, if you will ask her mercy, and confess your fault do not refuse mercy offered, ask the Q. forgiveness, to whom M. Filby answered, I never offended her, well then said the sheriff make an end, and thus desiring all Catholics to pray for him he prayed, saying his *Pater noster*, and his *Ave*, and *In manus tuas*, etc., and when the cart was trailing away, he said, Lord, receive my soul, and so hanged knocking his breast several times, till some pulled down his hands, and so finished his life.

#### 4.11 *John Field and Thomas Wilcox, First Admonition to the Parliament (1572)*<sup>14</sup>

Strong Protestants had far more reason to be pleased with Elizabeth. Early in her reign, John Foxe and others championed her as the English Deborah (see document 3.17 above), leading the English Church out of papist superstition and persecution. But the honeymoon ended by the 1570s. Some Protestants saw the Elizabethan Settlement and the Thirty-Nine Articles as just the first step towards further reform, whereas the queen and some of her bishops viewed further reform as the first step towards anarchy. The clergymen John Field (1544/5?-88) and Thomas Wilcox (ca. 1549-1608) were two such critics. They laid out the Church of England's flaws in a pamphlet, asked Parliament "to reform God's Church," and were promptly incarcerated. What type of Church did they want, specifically with regard to Church government (how clergy were chosen), liturgy (how Church services were to be conducted), and Scripture study? Why did they appeal to Parliament instead of the Queen?

Seeing that nothing in this mortal life is more diligently to be sought for and carefully to be looked unto than the restitution of true religion and reformation of God's Church, it shall be your parts (dearly beloved), in this present Parliament assembled, as much as in you lieth to promote the same, and to employ your whole labor and study, not only in abandoning all popish remnants both in ceremonies and regiment, but also in bringing in and placing in God's Church those things only which the Lord himself in his word commandeth. ...

Your wisdoms have to remove advowsons, patronages, impropriations, and bishops' authority, claiming to themselves thereby right to ordain ministers, and to bring in that old and true election which was accustomed to be made by the congregation. ... Appoint to every congregation a learned and diligent preacher. Remove homilies, articles, injunctions, a prescript [prescribed] order of service made out of the mass-book. Take away the lordship, the loitering, the pomp, the idleness and livings of bishops. ...

<sup>14</sup> *An Admonition to the Parliament* (n.p., n.d., Hemel Hempstead?, 1572), sig. A[iii], [Aiii(verso)]-[Aiv], Biii-[Biii(verso)], [Dii(verso)-Diii].