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# HENRY BULLINGER'S INFLUENCE ON THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

*George M. Ella*

*Henry Bullinger, successor to Zwingli in Zurich, never visited England and yet his influence can be identified in a vast range of areas of English Christianity from the 1530s through to beyond his death in 1575. His correspondence and hospitality sustained a number of key people to shape the Reformed Church of England.*

## **Bullinger's Contacts with Tudor England**

When dealing with Calvinism in England during 1558–1640, Patrick Collinson argues that it was not Calvin's *Institutes* which represented the centre of theological gravity of the Elizabethan Church but the works of Peter Martyr and Henry Bullinger.<sup>1</sup> Mention of the latter is especially interesting as although Martyr served in England for a number of years, Bullinger never set foot in England yet he was still considered as sharing the top rung of the Church of England ladder of fame. Indeed, Bullinger's importance to the English Reformation can scarcely be exaggerated. Exiles from the persecutions of Cardinal Wolsey and Henry VIII's notorious Six Articles found shelter in Bullinger's, Switzerland and his house was always full of English refugees. For instance, the martyr John Hooper stayed two years in Bullinger's home with his entire family becoming deeply influenced by the beautiful character and plain but profound teaching of the Reformer. Writing to Bullinger in January, 1546, Hooper said:

These singular gifts of God exhibited by you to the world at large, I was unwilling to neglect, especially as I perceived them seriously to affect the eternal salvation and happiness of my soul: so that I thought it well worth my while, night and day, with earnest study, and an almost superstitious diligence, to devote my entire attention to your writings.<sup>2</sup>

It is thus no surprise to find Bullinger's doctrinal and historical works, accompanied by many commentaries appearing in England during the middle 1520s onwards with Miles Coverdale being one of his many translators. Two of Coverdale's most often printed translations were

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Collinson 'England and International Calvinism 1558-1640,' in *International Calvinism 1541-1715* (ed. Menna Prestwich; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), pp. 214-215.

<sup>2</sup> Hastings Robinson, ed., *Original Letters*, vol. I (Cambridge: University Press, 1846), p.33.

*The Olde Fayth*—a summary of the Old and New Testaments, and *The Christen state of Matrimonye*.

Nicolas Eliot, who had also enjoyed Bullinger's hospitality, told him:

Not only the church of Zürich, but all other churches which are in Christ, bear witness to the skill, and purity, and simplicity of faith, with which you have expounded the whole Bible, and especially the epistles of St. Paul. And how great weight all persons attribute to your commentaries, how greedily they embrace and admire them, (to pass over numerous other arguments) the booksellers are most ample witnesses, whom by the sale of your writings alone, from being more destitute than Irus and Codrus, you see suddenly becoming as rich as Croesus. May God therefore give you the disposition to publish all your writings as speedily as possible, whereby you will not only fill the coffers of the booksellers, but will gain over very many souls to Christ, and adorn his church with more precious jewels.<sup>3</sup>

On hearing that Henry VIII had separated from the pope, Bullinger wrote his *The Authority, the Certitude, the Stability and the Absolute Perfection of Holy Scripture and The Institution and the Function of Bishops* which he dedicated to the King and sent copies of to Cranmer and Cromwell via his former students Nicolas Eliot and Nicolas Partridge. The King and Cranmer demanded that Bullinger's Latin works should be translated into English and Elliot wrote:

Your books are wonderfully well received, not only by our king, but equally so by the Lord Crumwell, who is keeper of the king's privy seal and vicar general of the church of England...but your writings have obtained for you a reputation and honour among the English, to say nothing of other nations, beyond what could possibly be believed.<sup>4</sup>

By the early 1540s, Bullinger was so loved in England that even single letters received were quickly translated, printed and distributed in tract form. When, for instance, Jan Laski approached Archbishop Cranmer about publishing Bullinger's *Absoluta de Christi Domini et catholicæ ejus ecclesiæ Sacramentis tractatio*, Cranmer told Laski to go ahead, saying that he had no need to examine the work first as all Bullinger's works were the very best.

John ab Ulmis, another of Bullinger's former students, now completing his studies in England, kept his mentor up to date on the progress of the gospel there. In 1548, he wrote:

<sup>3</sup> Hastings Robinson, ed., *Original Letters*, vol. II (Cambridge: University Press, 1847), p. 620.

<sup>4</sup> Robinson, *Original Letters* II, p. 618.

You must know then that England, which I have entered under favourable auspices, but yet not without very great pecuniary expense, is adorned and enlightened by the word of God; and that the number of the faithful is daily increasing in vast multitudes more and more. The mass, that darling of the papists, is shaken, and in many places its condition corresponds with its name that is, by the best of rights, namely, a divine right, it is condemned, and with a safe conscience entirely abolished. The images too are extirpated root and branch in every part of England; nor is there left the least trace which can afford a hope or handle to the papists for confirming their error respecting images, and for leading away the people from our Saviour.<sup>5</sup>

Catabaptist and Anabaptist ideas entered England much later than on the Continent but in the 1530s and 40s Bullinger's anti-Catabaptist writings were being translated into English by such as John Veron. Bullinger's *An holsome Antidotus against Anabaptistes* and *A Dialogue between the seditious Anabaptist and the true Christian, about obedience to Magistrates* went into several English editions. William Ames mentioned a work on the Catabaptists from Bullinger's pen called *Three Dialogues between the seditious libertine or rebel Anabaptist, and the true obedient Christian: wherein obedience to magistrates is handled* printed at Worcester in 1551. As several of the Anglican Articles were composed against the Anabaptists, Bullinger must be viewed as a likely source of information.

The only time Bullinger appears to have retracted any of his theology was very early in 1530 when he took to prophecy and produced his *De hebdomadis quæ apud Daniele sunt, opusculum* on Daniel's visions. This was almost immediately corrected in his homilies on Daniel but not before the work had been banned in England. This, however, gives some indication of the speed with which Bullinger's works were translated into English.

Edward VI, on coming to the throne, wrote to thank 'his friend' Bullinger for his and Zürich's faithfulness in looking after British refugees and added:

In addition to which, there is also a mutual agreement between us concerning the Christian religion and true godliness which ought to render this friendship of ours, by God's blessing, yet more intimate.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Robinson, *Original Letters* II, p. 377.

<sup>6</sup> Robinson, *Original Letters* I, p. 1.

## Bullinger's Support of those Persecuted under Mary

This more intimate friendship between England and Zürich became apparent after Edward's death. Bullinger was a close friend of the Grey family and conducted a most enlightening correspondence with the young Lady Jane. She had been brilliantly coached by Martin Bucer who died in February 1551, after which she grew to depend more and more on Bullinger for her spiritual support. Writing to him in July 1551, she called him the 'brightest ornament and support of the whole church of Christ,' and, 'the father of learning.'<sup>7</sup> Jane's third and final extant letter to Bullinger is dated in the early summer of 1553 and closes with the words, 'As long as I shall be permitted to live, I shall not cease to offer you my good wishes, to thank you for the kindness you have showed me, and to pray for your welfare.'<sup>8</sup> Jane was executed under Mary in February 1554.

Throughout Mary's further persecutions, Bullinger continued to keep an open home for the English refugees and exercised his pan-European influence, enabling the English exiles to set up churches throughout the Continent. He helped them find suitable pastors, told them how to deal with the state authorities and how to defend the faith when placed under pressure to renounce Christ. The largest Continental English refugee church during 1554–1559 was at Frankfurt where Emperor Charles V had given the English the freedom of the city. It was Bullinger who sent Thomas Lever to Frankfurt where he became the church's pastor. Through Lever's diplomacy and moderation and his keeping to sound Reformed principles in the face of several 'fiery spirits,' the so-called *Liturgy of Compromise* was drawn up which subsequently united the conflicting parties and became the basis for English worship throughout Germany and Switzerland. Lever also served as a go-between in Bullinger's correspondence with Calvin.<sup>9</sup>

The letter that Lever and eleven of his friends sent to Bullinger and the Zürich magistrates in 1554, requesting asylum in Zürich has been preserved in the Parker Society's *Original Letters* and reads:

Forasmuch as we are exiled, most honourable magistrates, from England, our beloved country, and for the sake of that light of divine truth by which she was lately distinguished, we humbly request of your worthiness, that we may be permitted to sojourn in this most famous city, relying upon and supported by your sanction, decree and protection against the violence

<sup>7</sup> Robinson, *Original Letters* I, pp. 4–7.

<sup>8</sup> Robinson, *Original Letters* I, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> See, for instance, Calvin's letter to Bullinger dated 28 April, 1554 which was a reply to a letter Bullinger had entrusted with Lever for Calvin, in *Calvinism in Europe 1540-1610: A Collection of Documents* (eds. A.C. Duke et al; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 38-41.

of those, should any such be found, who would oppose and molest us. The Lord knoweth, for whose sake we have left our all, that we seek for nothing besides himself. And for this reason chiefly we have unanimously and with ready minds come to this place, where he is most sincerely preached and most purely worshipped. This being the case, we entertain the hope that, as you are most zealous defenders of the true Christian religion, so you will protect us by your authority, who by reason of the same are exiled and homeless. May the Lord Jesus long preserve you and this your industrious state in safety and prosperity! Your most humble petitioners, Robert and Margery Horne, James Pilkington, Thomas Lever, John Mullins, Thomas Bentham, Richard Chambers, Thomas Spencer, Henry Cockraft, Michael Reniger, Laurence Humphrey, William Cole.<sup>10</sup>

These twelve saints were given the best of hospitality and they testified to living in Zürich ‘with great glee.’ The printer Froschauer took all twelve into his home as most of the other Reformer’s houses such as Bullinger’s and Pellican’s were already full to bursting point with English refugees. These homeless saints were to become the pillars of the Reformation under Elizabeth, filling important places in church, state and the universities. Queen Elizabeth, on her coming to power, wrote to Bullinger and the Zürich church, conveying her thanks and sending them a gigantic silver cup in token of her friendship. When the pope issued a bull in 1570 ‘excommunicating’ Elizabeth, and claiming her Queenship was null and void, Bullinger wrote his *Refutatio Bullae papisticae contra Angliae Reginam Elizabetham* in which Bullinger defended the ‘true Christian Queene, and of the whole Realme of England.’

Robert Horn and Richard Chambers joined the refugee church in Frankfurt under David Whitehead after Lever had become a pan-European contact-man between the exiles. Like Eliot before them, they kept Bullinger informed concerning England’s predicament during Mary’s atrocities. They wrote on February 3, 1556:

But if we should here attempt to enumerate all the benefits you have conferred upon us, it would probably be too disagreeable to yourself, who prefer rather to be active in doing good, than to have the reputation of it; and it would also be too troublesome a task for ourselves. For how much should we have to record of your counsel, sympathy, and protection! You it was, who consiliated to us the good will of your townsmen, and who procured the munificence of the government to be extended towards us. Nor did you content yourself merely with obtaining for us the good offices both of your family and your country; but in addition to this, by letters to those at a distance, you occasioned the liberality of other and unknown individuals to be poured out upon us from all quarters. By

<sup>10</sup> Robinson, *Original Letters* II, pp. 751-752.

your writings also you sought to reach even those our friends at home, by whose kindness we have been supported; and this, that you might not be behind hand in exciting them to so godly a purpose, and in aiding us that we should not be deprived of their assistance.<sup>11</sup>

It was through correspondence with one of the Frankfurt exiles, Edwin Sandys, that Bullinger first heard of Mary's death. Sandys had settled down on the Continent and took on Frankfurt citizenship with his friend John Ponet, feeling he would never be able to return to England again. He was sitting down at dinner with John Foxe and Peter Martyr when news of Mary's death reached them. Sandys, who had been imprisoned under Mary, refused to return, complaining that he had experienced enough misery in England but Grindal who also had grown to love Germany and was ever after termed 'Germanical' persuaded him to return and help build up the Protestant church in England. Sandys thought it his duty to inform Bullinger immediately of Mary's death and wrote to him in his usual jovial manner:

We yesterday received a letter from England, in which the death of Mary, the accession of Elizabeth, and the decease of cardinal Pole<sup>12</sup> is confirmed. That good cardinal, that he might not raise any disturbance, or impede the progress of the gospel, departed this life the day after his friend Mary. Such was the love and harmony between them, that not even death itself could separate them. We have nothing therefore to fear from Pole, for *dead men do not bite*.<sup>13</sup>

Naturally, Bullinger used his vast international influence to make sure that monies were provided so that the English refugees could return home.

## Bullinger and the Elizabethan Settlement

As soon as Thomas Lever returned to England, he informed Bullinger that he had contacted the underground church which had become weaker and weaker under Mary's reign of terror but was now seeing times of revival. He continued:

Some of us preachers, who had returned to England from Germany, being much affected with these things, and considering that the silence imposed for a long and uncertain period was not agreeable to the command and

<sup>11</sup> Robinson, *Original Letters* I, pp. 129-130.

<sup>12</sup> Mary's relation and henchman and fellow-persecutor of the saints. Mary had made Pole Archbishop to replace Cranmer whom she had burnt at the stake.

<sup>13</sup> Hastings Robinson, ed., *Zürich Letters*, vol. I (Cambridge: University Press, 1845), p. 3.

earnest injunction of Paul, to preach the word of God in season and out of season, having been requested to do so, forthwith preached the gospel in certain parish churches, to which a numerous congregation eagerly flocked together. And when we solemnly treated of conversion to Christ by true repentance, many tears from many persons bore witness that the preaching of the gospel is more effectual to true repentance and wholesome reformation, than any thing that the whole world can either imagine or approve...Now popery is at length abolished by authority of Parliament and the true religion of Christ restored.<sup>14</sup>

## The Vestments Controversy

Robert Horne and Edmund Grindal, both old friends of Bullinger and now bishops, wrote to him often, especially during the 1560s, requesting help in restoring the Reformed Church of England and improving state-Church relationships. They also sought Bullinger's advice concerning the wearing of habits (vestments), a topic which was threatening to split the ranks of the Reformers. Several of the exiles were introducing new forms of clerical wear, allegedly after 'the French fashion' which they claimed were marks of a truly Reformed Church. Bullinger responded with his *Epistola ad Episcopos et fratres in Anglia* in which he declared that the Church of England was correct in her understanding of the vestments. Many of these troublemakers, mistakenly believing that Calvin supported their legalistic and separatist enthusiasm, claimed that they were 'Calvinists' and therefore true supporters of the Swiss Reformation. Bullinger, Gualter, Beza and Calvin all wrote to the English rebels, appropriately named *Precisians*, telling them that they had not only misinterpreted the Swiss Reformation, but they had also misinformed their Swiss advisors as to the state of the English Church and were misusing Switzerland's and Geneva's good names by forcing imagined Continental externals onto the English. Grindal gives a minute account of this more-Calvinist-than-Calvin movement in his letter to Bullinger of June 11 1568.<sup>15</sup>

It appears by this time that the *Precisians* in London had set up rival churches of some 200 members in all, ordained their own ministers, elders and deacons, celebrated the Lord's Supper together and made church discipline and order a saving doctrine. They rapidly split up into various Separatist movements and exercised excommunication against one another. Grindal points out that the 'Puritans' who were thought to be the most radical of Reformers such as Dean Laurence Humphrey, Dean Thomas Sampson and Pastor Thomas Lever would have nothing to do with these

<sup>14</sup> Hastings Robinson, *Zürich Letters: Second Series* (Cambridge: University Press, 1845) p. 30.

<sup>15</sup> Robinson, *Zürich Letters* I, pp. 201-202. See also pp. 175-181.

legalistic Separatists. Even Nonconformist Knox denounced them. The Separatists thus called the Bullingerites 'semi-papists' and forbid them and their followers to attend their preaching. This trouble is indeed the origin of the myth that Bullinger strove to introduce another Reformation than that of Calvin, though the externals these Separatists set up as signs of a true church were not to be found in Geneva. However, it must be said that although Calvin wore French ecclesiastical robes including the hat English Dissidents ridiculed, Zwingli and Bullinger merely preached in their best Sunday suits. The mention of Lever, Humphrey and Sampson is of note as they were instrumental in bringing peace between the Anglican Reformers at Frankfurt and those at Geneva during the brief so-called Coxian-Knoxian controversy during the Marian persecutions.

### Alarming Tones from Geneva

Nevertheless, Bullinger feared that the Genevans would end up like the Anabaptists in their close identification of external discipline with the witness of the true church. He saw, in particular, the danger of a church yielding the sword of excommunication too freely and when Calvin, Farel and Viret strove to enforce a severe form of excommunication in their churches towards the end of 1543, Bullinger warned them against placing barriers against the true nature of the church and destroying the communion of the saints. He thus wrote to a fellow pastor on 22 November, 1543:

I have read what Calvin says in his Institutes concerning excommunication and he will in my opinion not deny that one must be very careful in estimating the situation so that the peace of the Church will not be disturbed in which, above all, one must protect the wheat so that it will not be thrown out with the chaff. Amongst enemies of the Word, some would very much desire that we re-introduce excommunication because they hope, not without reason, that our Church will soon fall apart in numerous sects. I would prefer to retain any Church than have none... Concerning the examining (of worshippers) before attending the Lord's Table, I can only conclude that it is a preparation for auricular confession, that corrupt evil in the Church. One introduces confession again and builds a fence around the Lord's Supper so that only a few Table guests may partake of it and the meal of thanksgiving becomes a torturing of the conscience.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Wilhelm Kolffhaus, 'Der Verkehr Calvins mit Bullinger,' in *Festschrift zum 400 Geburtstag Johann Calvins* (Leipzig: Rud. Haupt, 1909), p. 37.

Bullinger believed that once the Genevan and Waadt Reformers were left to themselves and pulled out of the Swiss Reformation, dominated by Bern, Basel and Zürich, they would become sacramentalists and lead their Reformed churches back to Rome. That this fear was not groundless is shown by Calvin's and Farel's own correspondence on the subject in which they discussed introducing auricular confession as a church rite. Calvin wrote to Farel from Strasburg in May 1540 to say:

I have often declared to you that it did not appear to me to be expedient that confessions should be abolished in the churches, unless that which I have lately taught be substituted in the place of it.<sup>17</sup>

Calvin's suggested 'substitution' was personal confession in the minister's ear before partaking of the Lord's Supper. When Bullinger heard that Farel and Calvin were putting the Reformation clock back, he told Farel:

You stand so high in our esteem of your learnedness and integrity that we cannot suspect, let alone believe, that you are capable of such a thing. If we enforced folly so far that we allowed nobody to partake of the Lord's Supper without enquiring beforehand about their faith, what would that be, my Farel, but a preparation for a return to the auricular confessions of the papists? We must beware, honourable Farel of walking on papist paths after taking up the holy rules of the Apostles.<sup>18</sup>

## Bullinger Mediates between Elizabeth and Geneva

After taking over from Calvin, Beza was rather worried how Elizabeth would view him as Calvin was accused of supporting Knox and Goodman in their criticism of the English Royal line in general and rule by women in particular. Beza had also been upset to find that Queen Elizabeth had not acknowledged a work of his and concluded that he was considered 'hateful' to her. He thus wrote to Bullinger on September 3, 1566, asking for his cooperation in sending a peace delegation from the Zürich and Geneva churches to patch up old quarrels with Elizabeth and the Reformed Church of England. Addressing Bullinger as 'my father,' Beza told him that he alone in Switzerland had the authority and ability to deal with the English Queen and the English Church. He wrote further:

The reason for her dislike is two-fold: one, because we are accounted too severe and precise, which is very displeasing to those who fear reproof;

<sup>17</sup> Calvin, *John Calvin Collection*, on Ages CD-ROM.

<sup>18</sup> Kolffhaus, 'Der Verkehr Calvins mit Bullinger,' p. 37.

the other is, because formerly, though without our knowledge, during the lifetime of Queen Mary two books were published here in the English language, one by master Knox against the government of women, the other by master Goodman on the rights of the magistrate. As soon as we learned the contents of each, we were much displeased, and their sale was forbidden in consequence: but she notwithstanding cherishes the opinion she has taken into her head. If therefore you think the present cause worthy of being undertaken by us, it would seem the most suitable plan, and most useful to the brethren, that someone should be chosen from your congregation, if not by the express authority, at least with the permission or connivance of your magistrates, to proceed to England on this special business, and openly solicit from the queen and bishops a remedy for these evils. This would be indeed an heroic action, worthy of your city, and, as I think, very acceptable to God, even though it should not altogether succeed according to our wish.<sup>19</sup>

Bullinger's known influence in England reflected by Beza's plea led Adolf Keller to say that Bullinger was considered 'the oracle of the Elizabethan bishops.'<sup>20</sup> The matter was not at all as clear as Beza described things. When Lord Cecil challenged Calvin on this issue,<sup>21</sup> he denied any support of Knox concerning his revolutionary writings. However, the Knox party insisted that Knox had discussed their revolutionary undertakings with Calvin who showed great sympathy. So, too, Calvin had written to Bullinger in April 1554, repeating in full his discussions with Knox on the subject and his basic agreement with him.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, Bullinger put in a good word for Geneva and such an amiable fellowship ensued between the Church of England and the Geneva Church that when Beza became bankrupt, Archbishop Whitgift supported him from his own pocket and when Geneva's funds sank accordingly, the Church of England took up a generous collection, against the Queen's express wishes, to help the needy city state protect herself from a Roman Catholic takeover.

### The special importance of Bullinger's *Decades*

Now Bullinger's books became even more popular in England, with bishops such as John Parkhurst ordering all his clergy to purchase and study either the Latin or English text of Bullinger's writings. Parkhurst had spent over four years in exile under Bullinger's roof and remained a very

<sup>19</sup> Robinson, *Zürich Letters: Second Series*, p. 131.

<sup>20</sup> Adolf Keller, *Dynamis: Formen und Kräfte des amerikanischen Protestantismus* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1922), p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Robinson, *Zürich Letters: Second Series*, p. 34ff.

<sup>22</sup> Duke, *Calvinism in Europe*, pp. 38–41, 40.

ardent friend and disciple of the Swiss Reformer. Bullinger had written his *The True Christian Sacrifice* of 1551 at Parkhurst's prompting. However, no single work affected the English as much as Bullinger's *Decades*.

Single sermons and component parts of the *Decades* had appeared in English since the early forties and the complete German version was being used by students in England by 1566,<sup>23</sup> but the full work was probably not published in English until 1577 when an 'H.I. student in Diuinite'<sup>24</sup> had the five books printed in three volumes by 'Ralphe Newberrie dwelling in Fleete-streate a little about the Conduite.' They immediately became the standard work in England on 'the chiefe and principall pointes of Christian Religion.' The English version of the *Decades* was reprinted in full in 1584 and 1587 but the Latin version was regularly printed in England from 1551 on. Froschauer's versions were also widely distributed in England.

Richard Cox, Bishop of Ely, friend and correspondent of Bullinger's, was an avid reader of Bullinger's works and introduced these to his chaplain Thomas Cooper. When Cooper became Bishop of Lincoln in 1573, he began to promote the reading of the *Decades* in his diocese and by 1577 had made it compulsory reading for all the clergy below an MA degree. In 1583, Bishop Middleton of St David's had a copy placed in every parish church in his diocese and by 1584 Archbishop John Whitgift had made the *Decades* compulsory reading for the junior clergy. In the year 1586 the Archbishop drew up instructions for all candidates to the ministry which he entitled *Orders for the better increase of learning in the inferior Ministers*. Item I in his eight point official statement of procedure was:

I. Every minister having cure, and being under the degrees of master of arts, and batchelors of law, and not licensed to be a public preacher, shall before the second day of February next provide a Bible, and Bullinger's Decads in Latin or English, and a paper booke, and shall every day read over one chapter of the holy scriptures, and note the principal contentes thereof briefly in his paper booke, and shall every week read over one sermon in the said Decads, and note likewise the chief matters therein contained in the said paper; and shall once in every quarter (viz. within a fortnight before or after the end of the quarter) shewe his said note to some preacher nere adjoyning to be assigned for that purpose.

At the seventh sitting of Convocation on March 10th, Whitgift revealed his plans to build the education of the lower clergy around

<sup>23</sup> Letter from John Abel to Bullinger dated London, June 6, 1566, in Robinson, *Zürich Letters: Second Series*, p. 117.

<sup>24</sup> The Latin version gives '*impensis Radulphi Newberii et Hugonis Jaksonii*' so possibly Hugh Jackson was the translator.

Bullinger's *Decades* and again 'exhorted all the clergy to do their duty.' From then on, during Whitgift's administration, the bishops and clergy were admonished to keep up the training system which rapidly began to mold and establish the Reformed teaching of the Church of England.

The English Preface to the *Decades* blamed the former British bishops for being careless in educating candidates for the ministry. Others were scolded for prescribing the works of Calvin, Gualter, Musculus, Peter Martyr and Marlorat which were too complicated for the theological novice. No British authors were mentioned!<sup>25</sup> Bullinger, the writer explains, has neither Calvin's obscurity, nor Musculus' scholastical subtlety but is able to pack much sound, perspicuous doctrine into comparatively little space and make it interesting to read and easy to remember. Whitgift was having great difficulty with the Ultra-Puritans at this time who denounced catechisms and instructive reading other than the Bible. The writer says that such are like physicians who forbid their patients the very diet that does them good. Besides, he adds, we have not yet the clergy to undertake a comprehensive teaching ministry for students.

## Bullinger and the 1559 Act of Uniformity

When Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity re-established the Reformation in 1559, Bullinger was proclaimed the hero of the day. T.M. Lindsay wrote in his *History of the Reformation*:

When the Act of Uniformity was passed by Parliament, the advanced Reformers, who had chafed at what appeared to them to be a long delay, were contented. They, one and all, believed that the Church of England had been restored to what it had been during the last year of the reign of Edward VI; and this was the end for which they (the Reformers) had been striving, the goal placed before them by their friend and adviser, Henry Bullinger of Zürich. Their letters are full of jubilation.<sup>26</sup>

On May 22 of that year John Jewel who called Bullinger 'the only light of our age,'<sup>27</sup> told him happily:

Religion is again placed on the same footing on which it stood in king Edward's time; to which event, I doubt not, but that your own letters and exhortations, and those of your republic, have powerfully contributed.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Whitgift had already made Puritan Nowell's Catechism mandatory in spite of Thomas Cartwright's protests

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Lindsay, *History of the Reformation*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1908), pp. 111, 402.

<sup>27</sup> Robinson, *Zürich Letters* I, p. 138.

<sup>28</sup> Robinson, *Zürich Letters* I, p. 33.

Such words of praise are also to be found in the letters of Bishops Richard Cox, John Parkhurst, James Pilkington, Robert Horn, Edwin Sandys and Edmund Grindal. When Grindal and Horn heard that such as Percival Wiburn had informed Bullinger that Latin prayers and popish rites were still practiced in the Church of England, they told him that ‘prayers in a foreign tongue (Latin), oil, spittle, clay, lighted tapers etc.’ had been banned both by the Church and the law from England.<sup>29</sup> Wiburn told Bullinger that though there were still blemishes in the Church of England, ‘by the grace of God she is free from these evils.’<sup>30</sup> Wiburn laid the blame indirectly on Beza who later confessed that he had been misled by the English Ultra-Puritans. Wiburn also warned Bullinger that ‘many parties’ were distorting Bullinger’s works to suit radical opinions.

Given Bullinger’s enormous influence on the English Church, It is not surprising to find Helmut Kressner entitling his book on the Swiss and English Reformations *Schweizer Ursprünge des anglikanischen Staatskirchentums* (Swiss Origins of the Anglican State Church).<sup>31</sup> David J. Keep, writing of Bullinger’s enormous influence on the Biblical beliefs and structure of the English Church and nation in his *Theology as a basis for policy in the Elizabethan Church*, says:

In this paper I have attempted to offer a line of defence for the elizabethan settlement, not simply as the best available between Rome and Geneva, but as a positive system based on a clear exposition of the bible. This does not emerge from the compromises of the commons, or the swingeing satires of puritan pamphleteers. It is clear only in the theological writings of the time. Nor is it sufficient to read the elizabethan apologists. I suggest that their doctrines were clearly formulated in Zurich, emerging in effect with the independence of the city, which had long disregarded the German bishop of Constance. Bullinger, like Zwingli, taught that the total responsibility of the government cannot be divided. I offer this as a model of an important approach to the study of ecclesiastical history. We properly concern ourselves with the minutiae of dates and connections, of wills and statutes, but are sometimes in danger of forgetting that there is a body of faith behind these. In this instance we are able to see the elizabethan bishops as honourable christians seeking to establish the

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<sup>29</sup> Robinson, *Zürich Letters* I, p. 178 Grindal and Horn give a full list of the alleged popish practices still practiced in the Church of England. They deny that this is the case.

<sup>30</sup> Robinson, *Zürich Letters* I, pp. 187-191.

<sup>31</sup> Helmut Kressner, *Schweizer Ursprünge des anglikanischen Staatskirchentums* (no. 170 in *Schriften des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte*; Gütersloh: C. Bertelmann, 1953).

peace of Jerusalem, rather than as time-servers who were willing to cut their consciences, as well as their coats, to the whim of their mistress.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> David Keep, 'Theology as a basis for policy in the Elizabethan Church,' in *Studies in Church History* (vol. 11 of *The Materials, Sources and Methods of Ecclesiastical History*; ed. Derek Baker; Oxford: Blackwell, 1975), pp. 263-268.