



## Abstract from Article

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### **CHRISTOPHER GOODMAN AND THE ENGLISH PROTESTANT TRADITION OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE**

*Danner, D G*

Published: *Sixteenth Century Journal*, VIII, 3 (1977), 61-73.

## Abstract

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A distinguishing characteristic of Elizabethan Puritanism was hatred of every vestige of popery. The political counterpart of this ethos could be labeled patriotism. The Marian exiles, especially those nurtured safely in Calvin's Geneva from 1555-1560, became the prophetic, free spokesmen for radical change in Elizabeth's via media; they desired the more apostolic form of presbyterian church polity as a substitute for the episcopal and hierarchical system inherited from Rome. Sir John Neale believes that "revolution" is the only adequate term for this radical posture because of its far-reaching political and social consequences. Sixteenth century Elizabethan politics was a "curious world of conflicting ideologies." Elizabeth found herself fighting a triangular duel and suffering from the shots of the other two duelists, Catholics and Puritans. The latter gave as much trouble as the common enemy. In a letter to Lord Bacon in 1559 Matthew Parker wrote of Christopher Goodman's *How Superior Powers Ought to be Obeyed*, if such principles be spread into men's heads, as now they be framed, and referred to the judgment of the subject to discuss what is tyranny, and to discern whether his prince, his landlord, his master, is a tyrant, by his own fancy and collection supposed; what Lord of the council shall ride quietly minded in the streets among desperate beasts? What minister shall be sure in his bed chamber? These statements would indicate more than an interest in church government. In what ways were Goodman's ideas more revolutionary than his contemporary Puritan revolutionaries? The present study is an attempt to answer this question by examining the life and thought of Goodman within a biographical framework in comparison with other religio-political thought of his day.

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